The application of cognitive poetics to the primary school reading experience

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

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2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the reading experiences of Key Stage 2 students, through a cognitive poetic lens. Cognitive poetics is a strand of stylistics that helps us to understand the reading process. This is particularly useful given the current state of English education, where scores, tests, de-contextualised grammar and linguistic analysis dominates the field. This thesis champions authentic reading as a way of challenging these distorted priorities and seeks to reflect and engage with an individual's own interpretation and reading of the text. Legitimising individual students' responses, with the use of cognitive poetics, has allowed me to unearth the elements of English and reading I believe are particularly salient.

The thesis details the findings of my ethnographic investigation of a school advocating for reading for pleasure, authenticity and personal response. It draws on two cognitive poetic frameworks (schema theory and text-world theory) to examine the potential of individual student textual interpretation, the aspects of their background knowledge that had contributed to these interpretations, and the process of their eventual understanding. This research is especially valuable in highlighting the potential of cognitive poetics as a 'lens' through which to view reading practices in schools. The relevance of this research is undeniable when situated alongside current debates in the field of English - including arguments surrounding a 'best' pedagogical practice, the effects, value and importance of reading, and the current content and culture of English in the classroom.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Currently in the UK, English studies have come under particular scrutiny, and a teach-to-the-test culture focused on 'correct' interpretations, reading comprehension and de-contextualised grammar teaching has dominated. The political stance of those in charge of National Curriculum design has been reflected in its frameworks throughout the years, despite persistent requests for changes to be made. Authentic reading, defined as "a reading that is born out of an individual's own process of unmediated interpretation" (Giovanelli & Mason 2015: 42), offers an opportunity to bring about these changes (i.e. personal response, creativity, reading for pleasure and individual interpretation). Restrictive, time-restraining and rule-governed frameworks make these changes particularly difficult. It is this contrast that brings forth the tensions in the field of English studies. Despite reassurances made by the DfE (2014a) that authenticity should remain (i.e. its reference to personal response, reading for pleasure and enjoying wider-reading) opportunities to enhance these skills are still not afforded within many schools. The DfE's (2014a: 86) mention of 'personal response' must be "informed" and is placed alongside a list of ways students must be able to "understand and critically evaluate tests" (DfE 2014a: 86). Restrictive, mis-leading opportunities for freedom are ultimately a result of high-stakes assessment, league tables and accountability cultures. This thesis therefore explores reading within schools, including the effects of a culture of "reading to analyse" (in order to pass their exam) and how authentic reading can contest this.

Within Chapter 1 this is something I pay close attention to. I begin the chapter by focusing on an account of these issues - outlining changes over the years, the complexities of these changes and how they have manifested into the negative conceptualisations we see within English studies today. Chapter 2 begins to cohere these statements (i.e. the issues and changes surrounding English education) and places them within the context of the current NC and key arguments surrounding a pedagogical practice. It is here that I also begin to move from a broad outlook on education and focus explicitly on the differing, diverse features of a 'best practice' and how these manifest into the classroom. Though establishing my stance and the relevance of this research throughout Chapter 1, I will remain neutral throughout Chapter 2 in order to offer an unbiased overview of three different conceptions of the value of English studies, offering a varied account of English pedagogies, which will further add significance to Chapter 2's conclusion where I explicitly outline the features of a 'best practice' that are crucial for fostering authenticity. The research has four key aims. The first two are:

1. To identify and outline current issues surrounding the study of fiction at primary level.
2. To identify the value of authentic reading, personal response and reading for pleasure, by building on work done in the field to extend this knowledge to Key Stage 2.

These first two research aims are achieved by cohering pre-existing research throughout Chapter 1 and 2. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 then begin to focus on applying these initial findings to a classroom environment. Introducing my chosen disciplinary approach (i.e. definitions, reasoning and explanations) within Chapter

3 is placed alongside research by Cushing (2018b). Cushing's (2018b) research offers a clear insight into the application of cognitive poetics to the classroom. Chapter 4 begins to focus on this application (in relation to my research) and therefore accounts for the ethical considerations and practical explanations surrounding the study. This is important for grounding the information provided in Chapter 5, where I offer an insight into my field notes, data excerpts and two interventions. The latter part of the thesis then focuses on my last two research aims:

1. To apply Schema Theory and Text-World Theory to offer a cognitively grounded account of 'good' practice in immersive reading classrooms.
2. To use Schema Theory and Text-world Theory as a tool for teachers to inform planning of activities.

Chapter 1 – Contextual State of Education

1.1 Introduction

The newly appointed National Curriculum (NC) changes are, at the time of writing, in full-swing. The majority of changes were introduced in September 2014, with changes to English and Maths coming into force for all years from September 2018. The new primary NC was first published in September 2013, with minor amendments made in May 2015. These changes represent a significant insight into shifts in educational practices over the years and despite debates surrounding the concept of a 'best' practice, there remain varying opinions on how this can or should be achieved.

To outline and discuss these changes I will be focusing on significant dates, government 'acts' and policy documents. Central to my discussion are a number of education papers and government reports. For clarity, these are listed below in chronological order:

- Education Act - 1870
- English Association (Founded) – 1906
  …LATE (*established through the English Association*)
- Butler Act – 1944
  …The London Plan (*adopted under the Butler Act)*
- 'Aims of English Teaching' Paper – 1956
  - Section 1 – Language and Experience
  - Section 2 – Reading
  - Section 3 – Poetry and Drama
  - Section 4 – Grammar
- Bullock Report – 1975
- Education Reform Act – 1988
- The 2013 National Curriculum
- The Cox Report (1989, but *discussed in reference to English teaching today*)
- Current National Curriculum
  - Section 1 – Secondary Education
  - Section 2 – Primary Education

When each report is first mentioned in this chapter, I have realised it in bold typography for ease of reference.

1.2 Evolution of the National Curriculum (NC)

Over the years, changes to the UK NC have been continuous. Curriculum content, school-grading systems, assessment and pedagogies have all come under fire, with policy makers dictating what is a 'best' pedagogical practice for teachers and students. The **Education Act** (passed in 1870) was the first parliamentary legislation outlining the provisions of UK education. Requirements were given for all children to pass 'frequent' tests in reading, writing and arithmetic, in order for teachers to be paid. This was the first major milestone in compromising a mechanical and routine-driven curriculum, heavily influenced by policy makers such as the government (cited in: Mallet 2017: 230). For years, this was the vision

of English that became common practice, and it wasn't until the **English Association** was founded (formed by teachers and scholars in 1906) that more focus was placed on the learner. Established through this were **LATE** (the London Association for the Teaching of English). The idea that the teacher and student should be at the heart of the curriculum was a concept that informed LATE's morals and key concepts, something Gibbons (2013: 139) argues was absent in earlier years.

The **Butler Act** (1944) was the first governmental legislation to fuel arguments surrounding comprehensivation of secondary schools. A comprehensive school was an establishment that did not select students based on academic achievement. The Butler Act (1944) ultimately paved the way for secondary education for all. Not only did it lay the foundations for the **London Plan** (which allowed for genuine comprehensivation) but it fuelled arguments amongst the lower and working-class regarding their desire for 'free' education (Gibbons 2013: 140).

1.3 LATE – 'The Aims of English Teaching' (1956)

As the move was made towards comprehensivation LATE saw an opportunity to drive their vision of English. Although comprehensive schools were introduced, 'specialist' teachers were more commonly found in grammar schools with the context and cohorts of comprehensive schools being significantly different (Gibbons 2013: 141). What LATE wanted in particular was to change what English meant to teachers. Their dedication to a more progressive, transferrable model of English was what they hoped would be the key to the majority of their work. They began to address concerns about what the curriculum should look like in comprehensive schools; with assessment and 'tests' being a key issue they sought to resolve. LATE had continuously expressed the importance of the learner. They felt by introducing the learner into the curriculum, aspects of students' culture, lived-through experiences and pre-existing knowledge should be used as foundations for curriculum content.

'The Aims of English Teaching' paper, published in 1956, was therefore the perfect opportunity for LATE to drive their vision of the subject. English was a subject that had come under particular scrutiny through the years; in that it was far more difficult to define than the other 'core' subjects. Unlike Maths and Science, which often have logical, indisputable answers, English and what it 'should' include has been a source of much discussion. It does not have clear boundaries or answers that should be taught. This LATE paper was therefore absolutely pivotal for anyone seeking to define English with a more progressive pedagogy.

'The Aims of English Teaching' was a project undertaken in partnership with the British Council, aimed at developing English teaching in India. However, Gibbons (2013) argues that the papers' success was due to its reach across a wider geographical scale. As the paper was based on humane, progressive principles that informed LATE, Gibbons (2013) argued that teachers and academics were able to relate to the paper on a much wider scale. Gibbons (2013) outlines the

four sections proposed within the project, which were structured and broken-down to cover various aspects of English as a school subject:

1. Language and Experience
2. Reading
3. Poetry and Drama
4. Grammar

1.3.1 Language and Experience

The first area explored in 'The Aims of English Teaching' paper is language and experience. Within this section LATE reiterated the importance of nurturing a child in developing language that will help them to think, perceive, feel and act. To do this it was recommended that the teacher paid particular attention to group work and children's interests and choices. Although the teacher was in no-way disregarded, LATE explained that their role should be to assist, not direct. Where this was of immediate importance was with regards to 'correctness' and implementing this in the classroom. Although the paper recognised the importance of 'correctness' they felt it should only be done with regards to adapting language to suit communications with wider social groups; so 'language for purpose'. 'Language for purpose' is a term familiar within the education sector, specifically at A-Level studies. Students are taught to be aware of the *audience* and the *context* surrounding communication. So, when being interviewed for a job, the language required would be different to the language used when communicating with your social group. By utilising language alongside experience, LATE wanted teachers and students to envisage language as a 'tool' – "not simply for learning, but for developing what might be called in today's educational world 'emotional literacy'" (Gibbons 2013: 143).

1.3.2 Reading

Similarly, to the previous section (1.3.1) experience was emphasised. LATE felt that experiences (both those gained through reading and those pre-existing in students) were pivotal in stimulating a child's curiosity. Although Gibbons (2013) was limited in his discussion of this section, the reference to "**experience** gained from books" and the incorporation of a child's "actual **experiences**" is best explained with regards to schema theory (outlined at Section 3.4.1). Schema theory helps to reiterate the value of students' pre-existing knowledge, memories and experiences to aid their understanding of a text. Adapting this information accordingly (when new information is provided) is a key principle of schema theory and something which LATE wants to promote – "He is also able, in the later stages, to go on *extending* and *organising* his imaginative life, by *gaining* through books experience which he would otherwise lack" (cited in Gibbons 2013: 143).

1.3.3 Poetry and Drama

When teaching drama or poetry, teachers were encouraged to read the text aloud, in order to reciprocate how this genre would traditionally be read. Although this is not a concept frequently adopted within education, it does have clear logic (a play is meant to be acted and drama should therefore be done alongside reading).

Embodied learning is especially useful in elaborating on the value of this. Glenberg et al. (2007) explored this by studying the correlation between actions and comprehension. Glenberg et al. (2007: 221) found that manipulating actions or objects (for example, toys) helped children to correspond particular words and sentences within the context of their surroundings. Similarly, to a parent/toddler interaction, whereby a parent saying "wave bye-bye" would be followed with the interaction of this *demonstrating how to wave* (Glenberg et al. 2007: 228). Embodied learning can therefore evidence how utilising actions helps inform meaning in reading. Once meaning and context were established, the paper outlined how grammar should be introduced.

1.3.4 Grammar

LATE outlined how grammar should only be made relevant when and in relation to meaning. For example, students should only be encouraged to identify grammatical features when this furthers their understanding and knowledge of the text. This meant that, similarly to LATE's suggestions in section one 'language and communication', grammar should not be used as a form of correctness. Gibbons (2013: 144) clarifies this by stating that "to learn a grammatical rule and then apply it in practice is therefore to put the cart before the horse". This is something that researchers in the field have studied extensively (i.e. Cushing 2018a; Cushing 2018b; Cushing 2018c; Giovanelli 2015); applying their knowledge to the primary and secondary classroom to identify the implications of de-contextualised grammar teaching.

1.3.5 'Aims of English Teaching' Paper – A Conclusion

Outlining these four sections meant that the LATE paper was crucial in helping to define English, what *it* (English) was as a subject and how it should be taught. However, their paper did have clear limitations. Gibbons found that the document did not: address problems with 'underachievers' of English or make a differentiation between spoken and written language (2013: 144).

Despite its limitations, the progressive principles LATE were trying to encompass in their paper have influenced concepts and beliefs (e.g. authenticity, contextualised learning, student-led lessons) that teachers and academics share today (see: Cushing 2018a; Cushing 2018c; Mallet 2017; Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Mallet 2016; Cremin 2015; Giovanelli & Mason 2015). However, it is difficult to determine the impact the paper had. Gibbons (2013: 145) felt that although the paper was clear in its success (LATE achieved their aim of outlining their vision of English in education), the support of a theoretical framework was required to add credibility. Creating an interplay between theory and practice was what Gibbons (2013: 145) felt would allow the paper to sustain its success within educational debates. However, LATE's 'Aims of English Teaching' paper **was** pivotal in placing emphasis on the student, and with the support of a theoretical framework Gibbons (2013: 146) felt it could be "a more fruitful starting point for a revised NC".

1.4 English as a Subject, and its Progression

After the 'Aims of English Teaching' was published in 1956, it was clear that more work was needed to increase awareness and clarity surrounding English as a subject. The Aims of English Teaching paper did little to influence policy makers. Policy makers often favoured a more traditional, prescriptive style of teaching and as a result neglected research and ideas that did not align with their beliefs. It was no surprise therefore that when the **Bullock Report** was published in 1975, it was discredited by policy makers. The Bullock Report, led by Alan Bullock, re-examined the debate on English as a school subject. It helped teachers to recognise the importance of language by urging them to view language as a tool "for real purposes and audiences" (cited in: Mallet 2017: 231).

Despite the Bullock Report aligning with the aims of teachers (see: Mallet 2017), the 1970 Education Act and its decisive frameworks bled into the newly formed **1988 Education Act**. Teachers, researchers and academics and all that they had been fighting for was seemingly ignored. The 1988 Education Act was ultimately the start of the NC and with this the government had undeniable power over what was taught in schools (Mallet 2017: 231). As suggested previously, policy makers (such as the government) were *mostly* advocates of more 'traditional' (teacher-led) styles of teaching. This meant that a subject-centred approach was favoured. A subject-centred curriculum occurs when the subject matter determines what is taught and how. Whilst this meant that there were clearer divisions for subjects (each area is focused on individually and in-depth) there was little flexibility with regards to cross-curricular activity. This was especially detrimental to English studies; with its key components (reading, writing and comprehension) valued and applicable across all disciplines (Sullivan & Brown 2013: 971).

The 1988 Education Act placed a more prominent focus on extensive testing and the publication of league tablets (which showed schools ranked according to performance). The subsequent formation of OFSTED in 1992 demonstrates that the decisive aims of the 1988 Education Act (i.e. standardisation) had significant impact. Gibbons (2016) explains that, historically, "decisions on curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment have been taken by national policy bodies, made – despite nods to notions of consultation – in rooms by ministers and civil servants, not by teachers who are seeking to reflect their own beliefs and ideas in the way they aim to create a practice that works for their pupils". Gibbons (2016) explored how an individual's "social, cultural and political" beliefs are deeply rooted in their ideas of a 'best' pedagogical practice. The current conservative majority government (current to the time of writing, in 2019 before the December general election), for instance, traditionally align themselves with policies that support standardisation (correctness, standard English, received pronunciation) and an appreciation of canonical, classical literature. According to Gibbons (2016: 41), these concepts are clearly seen within the **2013 National Curriculum**. He argued that the 2013 NC did not "reflect a multilingual, multicultural, globalised society; it is narrow, insular, and looking back to a time that in all probability didn't exist. It is conservative with an upper and lower case 'C'". It is therefore unsurprising that, with a culture of performance management (teacher pay based on pupil performance), Ofsted visits and league tables, teachers today are struggling to propose their own idea on how English should be taught (Gibbons 2016: 41).

1.4.1 The 2013 National Curriculum

The 2013 NC is a fruitful starting point in identifying the problems with curriculum content, not least because it does not differ substantively to the most recent NC. The 2013 NC has stark similarities to a pedagogy evident in the 1980s. Gibbons (2013: 138-139) argues that both the Education Reform Act 1988 and 2013 NC make little reference to the learner, their interests, concerns, motivations and needs. Where it does, learners' "needs" are determined by policy makers. By standardising English as a subject (promoting a culture of rules and correctness), the 2013 NC is attending to a very monolithic and narrow type of student, one who has interests, needs and concerns aligning with those dictating curriculum content (government). This shows the importance of recognising an individual's political stance; it ultimately helps identify and understand where these ideas on pedagogy are originating from (see: Gibbons 2016).

The 2013 NC also raises concerns about the maligning of the study of media, drama, moving image and indeed the side-lining of *all* literature (i.e. comics, blogs, journals). Although drama, media (and its inclusion of moving image and different genres) is sometimes taught, the seemingly narrow view of the subject (as laid out in the NC) offers teachers little freedom to explore it creatively. In other words, emphasis on 'correctness' within spelling, punctuation and grammar and being able to 'correctly' label linguistic features (especially for KS4 exams), is valued beyond exposure to less-traditional forms of literature. These concerns – as raised by teachers (see: Goodwyn 2012) – are manifesting into a NC that is restrictive, time-restraining and rule-governed. Although a timeline of events has evidenced the power and potential of a pedagogy utilising authenticity and personal growth for the learner, little has been done to help implement these changes. Gibbons (2016: 36-41) explained that teachers often felt unable to fight for change due to perceived potential risk to their job.

1.5 The Values of Teachers Today

There have been several studies that identify teacher values (Giovanelli 2015; Maybin 2013; Xerri 2013), specifically, how these values are intrinsically connected with ideas of a 'best' pedagogy. In order to identify patterns, researchers have often turned to the Cox Models. The **Cox Models** were first introduced in the Cox Report, published in 1989. Within this report, Cox outlined five 'models' of English which were used to propose a series of 'suggestions' for English teaching. These models were:

1. Personal Growth – "emphasises the relationship between language and learning in individual children, and the role of literature in developing children's imaginative and aesthetic lives"
2. Cultural Heritage – "emphasises the responsibility of schools to lead children to an appreciation of those works of literature that have been widely regarded as amongst the finest in the language"
3. Adult Needs – "focuses on communication outside the school" (day-to-day demands, workplace, spoken language and print, writing clearly, appropriately and effectively),

4. Cultural Analysis – “emphasises the role of English in helping children towards a critical understanding of the world and the cultural environment in which they live”
5. Cross-curricular – “all teachers have a responsibility to help children with the language demands of different subjects on the school curriculum, otherwise areas of the curriculum may be closed to them”.

(DES 1989; cited in: Goodwyn & Findlay 1999: 30)

Goodwyn and Findlay (1999: 20) explained that the five Cox models were “put forward, without evidence, as being of equal status and of equal value”. Yet (at the time and still today), this was not the case. Policy makers, academics and teachers had differing views on the relative value of the Cox models, including their relevance in the curriculum, and how often they should be implemented. There are even circumstances whereby individuals or cohorts would whole-heartedly prefer one particular model; for example, teachers often favoured the personal growth model (Goodwyn & Findlay 1999: 20).

After the publication of his first two teacher surveys (Goodwyn & Findlay 1999) which tracked teacher’s changes in perspective, Goodwyn (2010; 2012) continued to explore teachers’ perceptions of the Cox Models. In their 1999 study, Goodwyn and Findlay found that whilst teachers preferred the personal growth model, they did not discredit other models. Rather, they felt that as “experienced professionals they know how and when to employ different models” (Goodwyn & Findlay 1999: 26). The “overwhelming preference” for the personal growth model was something Goodwyn (2010; 2012: 213) tracked, recognising teachers’ consistent loyalty to it. Over time, the Cox Models (1989) have been especially useful in recognising teachers’ views and theoretical stances on classroom pedagogies. This is something undeniably useful when exploring how beliefs factor into practice (discussed in Chapter 2).

1.5.1 The Issues Teachers Face

Over years of debates about wished for a flexible curriculum that would allow them more opportunity, time and space to exercise their expertise and professional judgment. Yet little has been done to realise this desire. English has succumbed to unavoidable pressures of assessment and accountability English and education more broadly, teachers have consistently frameworks and it is these ideologies that are bleeding into the negative conceptualisations we see within English teaching and studying today.

Durran (cited in: Bleiman 2018) quoted an example on Twitter, about the implications of this within the secondary classroom. When he asked, “What is English?” to a UK Year 7 class (ages 11-12) one student said, “analysing texts” and when asked “why?” replied “to prepare for tests”. This negative conceptualisation of studying English also continued with students. A study conducted by the English Media Centre (EMC) Consultancy Team (2017) - exploring students’ A-level choices - found “that there was a 16% reduction in the number of students taking Literature in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17, a 17% reduction in Language and a 26% reduction in Lit/Lang”. This is something that teachers and educational organisations have expressed concerns about (Hali

2019; Reality Check Team 2019; BBC News 2013). The study of English at GCSE is clearly having a startling effect on students' attitudes towards the subject. For example, Goodwyn (2012: 216) argues that whilst students are passing their English exams – using the skills acquired in class to negotiate assessment hurdles – they are not enjoying the subject, despite possessing characteristics (e.g. critical enthusiastic readers) that the NC propose are required for a 'good' English student (Goodwyn 2012: 216).

Although the NC does outline the desire for schools and teachers to "promote wider reading", "to set ambitions for reading at home" and to "encourage reading for pleasure" (DfE 2014b; DfE 2013), this is made difficult within the context of performance management, league tables, accountability and the pressure of securing a "pass" at GCSE. It is easy then to identify where teacher values of personal growth are getting lost. Implementing features that would promote a love of English (authenticity and personal response) is made difficult when equipping students with the 'necessary' skills is required. How then, when a culture of *to read = to analyse = to pass tests* is in place, are students able to become avid, engaged, lovers of English?

1.5.2 How These Issues Reflect in the Study of Fiction

Research has helped to identify the issues (performance management, accountability) evident in the context of the literature classroom (Gibbons 2012; Goodwyn 2012; Au 2007; Dean 2006). In Goodwyn's (2012) study he uses three interrelated pieces of research to examine teachers' experiences of teaching literature; their perceptions of it and its status and significance both within and outside of the classroom. Two of the studies were surveys, exploring the views of student teachers due to finish their PGCE and current teachers respectively. The last was a small qualitative study investigating student teachers' experiences of literature teaching.

As a cohort, the teachers in Goodwyn's (2012) study were very passionate about English and reading was something they described as being at the heart of their love for the subject. However, they often felt that this was in tension with the skills they knew were needed to help students become 'good' (academically) at studying fiction (Goodwyn 2012: 213). Although they wanted to teach in more explorative ways, the teachers felt that assessment regimes and time-restraints hindered this opportunity. Time-restraints are consistently identified (e.g. Cushing 2018b; Cremin et al. 2014; Cliff-Hodges 2009; Dean 2006) and Goodwyn (2012: 18) found that this could be explained with regards to reading the whole text:

> the issue for teachers currently is that they feel under such pressure that the rather messy and slow process of engaging with a longer text is conceptualised as either a luxury that cannot be afforded or as a desirable experience that must wait for the survivors of 5-16 who select studying at A-level.

Teachers, though expressing the desire to make changes to English teaching, are undermined by high-stakes assessment. High-stakes assessment occurs "when results are used to make important decisions that affect students, teachers,

administrators, communities' schools and districts" (Au 2007: 258). This ties in with NC requirements of statutory tests used to indicate student success (SATS, GCSEs). Although academies (now more common in the UK) are not obliged to follow the NC, exams are based on NC content. The issues faced then (narrow objectives, time-restraints, lack of authenticity, assessment pressures, scripted 'right' answers) are consistent across all schools.

Mason and Giovanelli (2015; 2017) and Cushing (2018a; 2018b; 2018c) use stylistic-based frameworks to address the issues evident in the literature classroom, by offering opportunities for a "new, innovative" pedagogy. There are also studies that focus more explicitly on one problem. For example, Xerri (2013) focuses on poetry and the implications of a teacher described as the "gatekeeper to meaning" and Maybin (2013) evidences the potential of children voicing their own responses and views independently. These are all studies crucial in arguing for a more authentic, progressive, pedagogy and so will be explored in greater depth throughout. A clear pattern is therefore emerging of a subject, not just distorted, but a subject made difficult to enjoy.

1.6 The Current National Curriculum

It is clear that changes made surrounding the NC and English studies have not always been positive. The studies mentioned previously highlight the issues that teachers and students are currently facing.
Moreover, it is clear to see how the most recent NC frameworks, curriculum content and requirements relate back to the issues discussed above. When applicable these issues will be discussed in relation to the current NC.

The NC's entire aim for English (across secondary and primary education) is summarised by the Department for Education (DfE): "The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment" (DfE 2014a). However, the current NC makes this difficult to achieve.

1.6.1 The Secondary Education NC

In sections 1.6.1.1-1.6.1.3 below, I explore secondary education in relation to assessment styles, the study of fiction and grammar pedagogy.

1.6.1.1 Secondary Assessment Styles

The changes to secondary education have predominantly affected assessment styles. Although high-stakes assessments have remained throughout the years, this has been increasingly intensified. The NC and exam boards made the decision to remove all coursework in 2013 with changes starting in September 2015. It was also no surprise when, in 2017, the Department for Education axed the Creative Writing A-level, further restricting opportunities for more 'free' writing (Bleiman 2015). As the decision was made to remove all coursework, there were also plans to reform GCSE exams. Previously students studied "modular courses" (courses made up of several individual 'topics' all situated within a particular

subject) where they would study each module (often termly) and then sit their exam shortly after. Whilst modular courses remained, exams were no longer placed throughout the two years of study but instead at the end of the year. This meant students had an increased number of final exams to take and were heavily reliant on each exam to guarantee their 'pass'. Furthermore, grading changes were also made. Numerical grades from 1 to 9, replaced the previous letter grades (A*- C) and the boundaries were raised. For example, whilst a level 4 is equivalent to a grade C (the cut-off for a pass), a level 9 is not directly equivalent to an A*. For a student to achieve a grade 9 they would therefore need to score higher than the marks needed for an A*.

Whilst teachers are under immense pressure to equip students with the skills required to achieve a pass, Xerri (2013) found that there were often circumstances where students relied on their teachers to unearth textual meaning. Burdan (2004) argued that this was because, when frustrated by complex texts, students "often resign themselves to being passive observers of the expert reader". It is clear then with these three major changes, how the issues teachers and students face are manifesting within the English classroom.

1.6.1.2 Secondary Studying Fiction

Within the secondary NC, emphasis is placed on the power and potential of reading. Sullivan and Brown (2013: 971) suggest that reading has the potential to aid academic success throughout the curriculum, with Cliff-Hodges (2010a: 66-67) arguing that "the effects of reading literature stay with you well beyond the duration of the reading". Despite arguing that reading can help to develop students' cultural, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual understandings (across the whole curriculum and in themselves) the NC prioritises "the depth and power of literary heritage" (DfE 2014a: 86). The DfE's (2014a: 86) reference to "classic literature" also suggests that reading is only credible when 'worthy' texts are studied (as evidenced by Mason & Giovanelli 2017); making it difficult for students to develop an interest in reading and understanding of their reading preferences.

1.6.1.3 Secondary Grammar Pedagogy:

It is difficult to imagine a culture of 'reading for pleasure' when this mentality is not given to students. As well as restrictions on the styles of texts studied, the NC also outlines *how* these texts should be explored. The NC favour 'Standard English' (deemed as the 'correct' form of speaking) and 'Received Pronunciation' (deemed the 'standard' form of pronunciation). The DfE (2012) state that "pupils should be taught to: speak confidently and effectively, including through: using Standard English confidently". As well as being able to "use Standard English confidently in their own writing and speech" grammatical features must be identified and discussed in relation to textual effect. These "technical grammatical terms" are listed within the NC (see: DfE 2013: 7-25) (which students must be able to accurately identify within a text). Although Cushing (2018b: 9) identifies that secondary education *is* a space where grammar is often taught within the context of the text, there are clear implications for teachers who often feel grammar is "a virus spread from KS2" or that it has "infected English". It is likely

that the NC requirements for grammar are largely to blame. Cushing (2018b: 9) suggests that this "deep hostility towards grammar" is unsurprising given the controversial nature of GPS (grammar, punctuation, spelling) assessments which are integrated into English, History, Geography and Religious Education examinations.

1.6.2 The Primary Education NC

I now review the same dimensions – assessment styles, the study of fiction and grammar pedagogy – within the primary education NC.

1.6.2.1 Primary Education - Assessment Styles

As with secondary education, students in primary school are monitored on their academic progress. Although there haven't been many changes surrounding primary styles of assessment, there are clear similarities between primary and secondary education issues. In KS1 students are expected to complete their 'phonics screening check' (which requires them to read and decode words) (DfE 2019). Results from phonics tests allow teachers to identity which students need additional support moving up to KS2. At the end of KS2 all students must then sit the national Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) exams.

SATs tests are timed assessments, taken in Year 6 (DfE 2018):

1. English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: Questions
   Paper 1 is a combined question and answer booklet. Students will have 45 minutes to answer the questions, which are worth 50 marks in total. (see Appendix 2 for example).
2. English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: Spelling
   Paper 2 consists of a test transcript to be read by the test administrator and an answer booklet for students to write 20 spellings. The paper takes approximately 15 minutes but is not strictly timed. The spellings are worth 20 marks in total.
   (see Appendix 3 for example).
3. English reading
   The English reading test focuses on the comprehension elements of the national curriculum and includes a mixture of text types. The test is designed so that the texts increase in their level of difficulty. The test consists of a reading booklet and a separate answer booklet. Students will have one hour to read the 3 texts in the reading booklet and complete the questions, which are worth 50 marks in total.
   (see Appendix 4 for example).
4. Mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic
5. Mathematics Paper 2: reasoning
6. Mathematics Paper 3: reasoning

Once completed these tests are marked according to students' 'raw score'. The raw score is the exact mark the student got for each question, so if the paper was scored out of 60 and their mark was 55, this would be their 'raw score'. These raw scores are then placed alongside and in correspondence with a 'scaled score'. Mallet (2017: 404-405) defines scaled scores as comparative marks

based on other children within the country that have also taken the test. In all of their English tests, students are also assessed on their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

1.6.2.2 Grammar Pedagogy:

As seen in Appendix 2, the questions that students are asked are often de-contextualised and require them to select the appropriate grammatical forms. Cushing (2018b: 2) lists the grammatical forms the students are expected to learn (taken from the primary NC) and organises them according to "grammatical form-function" (shown in Table 1 below).

Cushing (2018b: 3) suggests that this is a form of assessment that is controversial due to its high-stakes nature. Students are expected to learn, recite and then recall de-contextualised grammatical terms at the age of 10-11. This is an immense amount of pressure for students; who are not only expected to learn these terms but then carry them on through to KS3 (where students are expected to apply them in relation to textual effect and meaning).

Grammatical form			Grammatical function
Word classes	Phrases	Clauses	subject
noun	phrase	clause	object
pronoun	noun phrase	subordinate clause	adverbial
relative pronoun	adjective phrase	relative clause	
possessive pronoun	preposition phrase	statement	
determiner	adverb phrase	question	
verb		exclamation	
modal verb	Tense	command	
auxiliary verb	simple present	active	
subjunctive	simple past	passive	
perfect			
progressive			
adjective			
adverb			
preposition			
conjunction			
subordinating			
coordinating			

Table 1: Grammatical terms to be learnt by KS2 students in preparation for the GPS tests

As with secondary education – where the implications of a 'teach to the text' mentality are seemingly most apparent – primary students are expected to enjoy a text despite a pedagogy that enforces analysis, decoding meaning, finding 'correct' answers and identifying key linguistic features. Despite students consistently passing their English SATs, Goodwyn (2012: 216) argues that subject enjoyment is absent. Whilst the NC promotes academic consistency, it does not create students who are excited by the prospect of English study. Although the NC references the value and power of English study (literature and language), such value is undermined by a focus on de-contextualised grammar teaching, mechanical lessons and dull assessment regimes (e.g. pick out the verb in the following sentence). This negative conceptualisation of English study is also solidified through the increased level of difficultly seen within English SATs assessments.

1.6.2.3 Studying Fiction

With regards to reading, the primary NC states that establishing an appreciation of reading will help students to understand the world and their place within it. Through this the NC outlines how vocabulary and understanding will therefore be

expanded, both within English and across the curriculum. At primary level, reading is structured into two 'segments' (DfE 2014a):

> Word reading – Which means students are able to decode words.
>
> Comprehension – This means students are able to understand the words and their meaning within the context of the whole sentence, paragraph or text.

These two segments are both used to help direct English 'literature' sessions and activities.

'Word reading' (a skill which requires students to decode words) is taught when students first arrive in KS1. During this stage phonics is taught (through the Read Write Inc Programme) which is designed to help students systematically articulate letters and words. The NC argues that phonics is necessary to prepare the students for reading at KS2, when the curriculum becomes more complex and fluent reading is required. Once this has been established reading lessons then focus on comprehension. Being able to read and understand the text is crucial for their SATs, where students are tested on their understanding (see Appendix 2 – Q7). As Cliff-Hodges (2016: 13) suggests, tests "can measure reading only within the specific parameters of a test's content, timing and mark scheme. Teacher assessment and research, on the other hand, can explore reading more subtly and responsively". It is difficult to imagine a scenario where students enjoy reading for pleasure, when most of the reading they encounter in school is placed alongside timed, marked tests.

1.7 Chapter 1 Conclusion

This contextual history of English education – detailing perceptions of the study of fiction, grammar, and assessment – demonstrates that educational policies have changed over the years. However, such changes have consistently been implemented by policy makers, with a lack of focus paid to student and teacher preferences. By tracing the origins of educational policies up to current curriculum content, the chapter also uncovers consistent and persistent issues within English education, namely lack of creativity, lack of teacher or student in-put and disregard of the personal growth model. In the next chapter, I consider the notion of a 'best practice' in English pedagogies.

Chapter 2 – Best Practices

2.1 Introduction

The idea of a 'best practice' is a difficult concept to navigate, and whilst I have identified the key issues present in education, it is clear that there is not a conclusive solution detailing how best to teach. I will therefore be discussing the key points evident in discussions of a 'best practice' in order to highlight how issues currently prevalent in education have manifested. This is especially important in creating context for my later discussion of Hirsch, Rosenblatt and Cremin.

2.2 Key Points Evident in Discussions of a Best Practice

The key points I will be discussing within this section are as follows:

1. Degree of focus on assessment,
2. Teacher vs student-led learning,
3. Degrees of authenticity.

Whilst relevant across the curriculum, I will generally consider these ideas in relation to English teaching (with a focus on the study of fiction where relevant). Authenticity will be discussed more predominately in relation to the English classroom and will form a conclusion for the previous points. It is also important to note that that these points are relevant throughout primary and secondary education and so I will not be focusing specifically on either.

2.2.1 Degree of Focus on Assessments - An Introduction

Discussions on the 'Contextual State of Education' (Chapter 1 of this thesis) have evidenced the timeline of assessment styles. A 'teach to the test mentality' is often a result of high-stakes testing, therefore impacting curriculum content and learning. This was an issue Au (2007: 258) acknowledged as widely contested in the field. There is research however that works to resolve this mentality, specifically with the use of theoretical frameworks (for example, cognitive poetics in Giovanelli & Mason 2015; Mason & Giovanelli 2017), exploring whole and/or multiple texts (Dean 2006) and through creative project work (Cremin 2015).

2.2.1.1 Those Favouring Current Assessment Styles

Aside from the obvious inclusion of high-stakes assessments, emphasis on test scores and the push for a 'one-size-fits-all' curriculum within the NC, there are only a few studies dedicated to the potential value of high-stakes assessment (e.g. Smith M.L 1991; Madaus 1988). Nichols and David (2008) argue that "the rationale for high-stakes testing is that the promise of rewards and the threat of punishments will cause teachers to work more effectively, students to be more motivated and schools to run more smoothly-all of which will result in greater academic achievement for all students, but especially those from poverty and minority backgrounds". Gunn et al. (2016) argue that this rationale is why high-stakes assessment has been placed at the forefront of education.

Although the NC is clear in what it dictates, there is no substantial evidence (aside from its continued inclusion and increased level of difficulty) to suggest that policy makers 'favour' assessment. In Chapter 1, I discussed teachers' and practioners' desire for 'change'. However, NC frameworks and Education Acts have ignored suggested changes surrounding assessment, instead making it increasingly more difficult for students to 'pass' (see: Section 1.6). A culture of performance-linked pay, league tables and pressure for students to acquire a 'pass' has persisted. For example, UK college teachers interviewed in Xerri's (2013: 137) study argued that they were "forced to adopt teaching methods that lead students to pass their examinations successfully rather than enjoy poetry".

2.2.1.2 Those Against Current Assessment Styles

There is, however, a lot of research that highlights the implications of 'high-stakes' assessment. For example, Au (2007: 258) analyses 49 qualitative studies to "interrogate how high-stakes testing affects curriculum". Although a small minority of his data suggested that high-stakes assessments could lead to "curriculum expansion", the general consensus was that high-stakes assessments were cleverly implemented to allow policy makers to "increase external control over what happens in schools and the classroom" (Au 2007: 264). It is therefore those within the school environment that are suffering most directly from high-stakes assessment. In their study, Gunn et al. (2016) argue that "while many studies have examined how testing affects students, schools and communities, little research has been done to determine how teachers perceive high-stakes tests".

Gunn et al. (2016) interviewed 'elementary' teachers to discover their perceptions of high-stakes assessment. Although this study was based within the US it is comparable to the UK educational system in that assessment styles are similar in the sense of "a test with major consequences or the basis of a major decision" (Gunn, et al. 2016: 56). Gunn et al. (2016: 60) found that the stress teaches felt for their students to succeed academically compelled them to focus on elements of the curriculum that were most likely to appear in the up-coming exams. Once again, although they recognise the implications of this, teachers feel that they have little control over what is taught and how (Goodwyn 2012).

Research has also identified the issues high-stakes assessment causes amongst students, as the preceding discussions in this thesis evidence. Studies have considered students with 'specific needs'. For example, Katsiyannis et al. (2007) explored "the historically poor [academic] performance of students with disabilities" by reviewing recent research in order to raise concerns over "minimum standards, permissible test modifications and alternate assessments". A lack of concern and consideration for students requiring additional help was something that Hopfenbeck (2017) also identified when exploring high-stakes assessment and the effect on student well-being. Hopfenbeck (2017) suggests that additional support needs to be implemented for students with specific 'needs' (e.g. anxiety, depression). This is crucial in ensuring all students have equal opportunities at academic 'success'.

2.2.1.3 Conclusion

High-stakes assessment is what Katsiyannis et al. (2007) feels "has become an increasingly popular assessment for schools to use" as it demonstrates "individual academic performance of students and provides accountability for school improvement". This enforces "standardisation", something which the government desires. Assessments are the perfect opportunity for government and policy makers to control education and identify 'poor achievers' (schools, leadership, teachers and students). Thus, whilst high-stakes assessment is predominantly viewed as problematic, it is unlikely to be removed or revised.

Research has suggested the importance of un-marked work: Taylor (2018) explored 'free-writing' (creative pieces of writing that were not marked) within primary education showing that the reward for students is motivation, inspiration and engagement with their own work. Nevertheless, at a time when assessments are likely to remain, it is important that research can offer opportunities for more 'authentic' teaching within NC content and assessment culture. Cushing (2018c) explores how stylistics can be used as a 'tool' to aid teachers in the classroom, whilst still keeping in line with curriculum content and assessment requirements.

2.2.2 Teacher vs. Student Led Learning - An Introduction

Pritchard (2009) suggests that the process of learning and developing our knowledge of this process (to aid student understanding) is essential in arguments surrounding best approaches to teaching. There are researchers and practioners that sit on either end of the spectrum (teacher-led or student-led) and understanding their views on education is crucial in identifying *why* this is something so widely debated.

In order to explore this in more depth, I will be discussing academics, practioners and researchers who align themselves with a teacher-led or student-led pedagogy. Once I have disseminated each 'argument' I will be cohering all of this together (within the conclusion) to discuss why this is something that is widely debated in the field.

2.2.2.1 Teacher-Led Learning

Teacher-led learning has strong similarities with arguments on "imparting knowledge" (which is best explained with regards to power). Hirsch (one of the three main figures discussed at Section 2.3) aligns himself with a teacher-led style of learning. When teachers impart knowledge to students, they are ultimately adopting the powerful role as expert to unearth textual meaning. This style of teaching is what Au (2007: 263) acknowledges is often a requirement for teachers to "cover the breadth of test-required information and procedures". By extending Hirsch's beliefs to a pedagogical practice, and ensuring students 'appreciate' literature, Mason and Giovanelli (2017: 327) argue that one form of knowledge is legitimised, whilst others are downgraded or dismissed. This concept is something also evident in Xerri's (2013) study on secondary student poetry perceptions.

2.2.2.2 Student-Led Learning

Student-led learning is a style of teaching evident in the aforementioned 'Aims of English Teaching' paper by LATE and the British Council (see: section 1.3). LATE explicitly reiterated that the teacher "assists" not "direct" learning with children's interests and individual choices utilised throughout. This is also evident in Giovanelli and Mason's (2015: 53) study. By comparing two case studies (student-led vs. teacher-led learning) Giovanelli and Mason (2015: 53) explored the value of student-led learning. They argued that students should be able "to reflect on the types of knowledge that they bring to create rich, meaningful, and often inter-connected readings, and to legitimise personal and alternative ways of interpreting texts". Students are therefore more likely to dictate aspects of their learning with teachers taking more of a 'back-seat', assisting role.

2.2.2.3 Teacher- vs. Student-Led Teaching Conclusion

With regards to the study of literature, it is often the case that those aligning with the 'teacher-led' stance believe that literature should be "classic", "canonical" and "appreciated". Contrastingly, those favouring a more "authentic" reading experience often favour 'student-led' curriculums. It is no surprise therefore that this is so widely contested within the field, not only because of the connection between belief and practice, but because *how* students are taught greatly effects their learning experience (Mason & Giovanelli 2015).

2.2.3 Degree of Authenticity

It is argued that authenticity is a good measurement of student enjoyment, as it denotes "genuine" and "real" learning experiences (Simpson 2016). Authentic learning is, I believe, best explained with regards to the study of fiction. In their study Giovanelli and Mason (2015: 42) define authentic reading as "a reading that is born out of an individual's own process of unmediated interpretation". By exploring a Year 7 class working on the novel *Holes* by Louis Sachar*,* Giovanelli and Mason (2015) evidenced how current NC frameworks and assessment pressures have manifested into a classroom where teachers are compelled to direct, impart knowledge and dictate what is taught (e.g. teacher-led pedagogy). This resulted in a reading they described as "manufactured", which occurs "when readers are denied the space to engage in their own process of interpretation" (Giovanelli & Mason 2015: 42); in other words, this is the opposite of authentic reading. Interestingly, the pedagogical features evident within Giovanelli and Mason's (2015) study are those that policy makers favour.

2.3 Key Areas of a 'Best' Practice – Introduction

Having discussed key aspects of controversy for a best practice (assessment, teacher vs. student led learning, degrees of authenticity) I now discuss the three main figures within education – Hirsch, Cremin and Rosenblatt – and their recommendations for a best practice. Although I am not arguing that teachers align themselves with all the same beliefs as Hirsh, Cremin, or Rosenblatt, these figures allow a discussion of the **main** arguments for a 'best practice' today. I discuss Hirsch and Rosenblatt first since they represent opposing viewpoints. I

then discuss Cremin who offers a more centralised view in that she adopts ideas and concepts by both Hirsch and Rosenblatt. Throughout, I will explicitly consider each of their views in relation to English Literature studies and the influence they've had on classroom practice today.

2.3.1 Hirsch

Hirsch (1988), an American educator and academic, focused his work on the knowledge of literature. His perceptions of English, and the study of fiction, are closely aligned with the 'cultural heritage' Cox Model (1989) which "emphasises the responsibility of schools to lead children to an appreciation of those works of literature that have been widely regarded as amongst the finest in the language" (DES 1989; cited in: Goodwyn & Findlay 1999).

2.3.1.1 Hirsch's Best Practice

Hirsch's (1988) 'cultural literacy' model uses tenants from the 'cultural heritage' model, particularly appreciating specific types of literature and promoting 'canonical' texts. Hirsch (1988) felt that acquiring knowledge of 'canonical' classic' texts would provide children with fundamental skills to become culturally literate, therefore allowing them to thrive in the modern world. Indeed, Hirsch advocates that "learning discourse about texts is as good if not better than young people actually reading them and works that are 'known by the culturally literate' should form the exclusive focus of the English literature curriculum" (Hirsch 1988).

As well as controlling what children should read, Hirsch (1988) uses his beliefs to inform what texts are analysed and how these texts are interpreted. He wanted teachers to direct and encourage students to acquire knowledge of the classics (e.g. Shakespeare), rather than allowing students individual choices or the use of different genres. Additionally, Hirsch believes that the meaning of the text should be taught in relation to the authors intended meaning: "if the meaning of a text is not the authors, then no interpretation can possibly correspond to the meaning of the text, since the text can have no determinate or determinable meaning" (cited in: Rosenblatt 1978: 109).

2.3.1.2 How Hirsch's Beliefs Informs His Theoretical Stance

In order to highlight how Hirsch's beliefs and theoretical stance on studying fiction relate to current practice, I focus on a study undertaken by Mason and Giovanelli (2017). Although neither of the two researchers advocate or align themselves with Hirsch, their study is useful in highlighting how Hirsch's 'theoretical concepts' look in the classroom. Their data suggests the damage of Hirsch's approach, something which other academics in the field have also recognised (Xerri 2013; Duncan-Andrade & Morelle 2008; Giovanelli & Mason 2015).

Mason and Giovanelli (2017) focused on an English Literature Year 7 (11-12) class who were studying *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. One of their focuses was the rise of the "Cultural Literacy" model; by reflecting more widely on "the perceived purposes of studying fiction with young people" (Mason and Giovanelli 2017: 318). Giovanelli and Mason (2015: 53) suggest that when a

teacher creates activities, tasks, asks questions or discusses certain aspects of the plot that foreground (that is, make prominent) particular themes, ideas and/or interpretations, this can create the illusion that student contribution is only worthy if relevant to the authorised focus of the lesson.

Each student had been given an 'educational' copy of the novel. This meant *Of Mice and Men* was split into six sections, with 'educational notes' placed at the beginning of each section, which provided: a summary of the up-coming section, a series of prompts designed to 'guide' their reading, detailed questions to help them pinpoint certain textual aspects and further activities to consider as they continued. Students were thus being taught about the book by these notes rather than developing their own interpretation and understandings. Hirsch's model promotes this form of teacher-led activity as it directs students to the aspects of the novel the author intended and ensures that students appreciate the novel's culturally recognised 'literary status'. However, Mason and Giovanelli (2017: 328) argue that certain responses, like excitement for the plot and novel and genuine engagement, are delegitimised. Consequently, Hirsch's model risks generated manufactured reading experiences, with students struggling to craft their own understanding, response and interpretation.

2.3.1.3 Evaluation of Hirsch's Model

Hirsch's arguments surrounding a 'best practice' are often evident in contemporary classrooms, even where schools or teachers are not advocating such an approach (e.g. Xerri 2013; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2008; Giovanelli & Mason 2015; Mason & Giovanelli 2017). Being able to 'understand' classic, canonical, texts often forces teachers to remain as the 'all-knowing' 'powerful' figure, so that they are able to in-put knowledge into their students - usually in order to help them 'pass' academically (Xerri 2013).

2.3.2 Rosenblatt

Rosenblatt is well-known for her reader response theory which helped to propel research surrounding 'naturalistic' (qualitative, ethnographic) reader response data (Peplow & Carter 2014), the value of second readings (Harrison & Nuttall 2018), reader emotions (Gibbons & Whiteley 2018) and as a lens to strengthen other frameworks (e.g. cognitive poetics) (see: Giovanelli & Mason 2018a). Her work also has implications for educational reading.

2.3.2.1 Rosenblatt's Best Practice

In literary studies, Rosenblatt (1995: 28) felt that more work was needed to emphasise the value of the reader: how an individual interpreted the text, how they reached this understanding, what they brought to the reading experience and how this was developed throughout. Rosenblatt (1995) consequently viewed the reading experience as 'transactional', which meant that meaning did not reside in the text or reader alone, rather meaning occurred when an exchange was made been the two.

Rosenblatt first explored these ideas in her monograph *Literature as Exploration* (1995) and elaborated them in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*" (1978). Rosenblatt (1978: 14-16) focused on what she called "the invisible reader", that is the seemingly 'invisible' aspects of the reading experience (personalities, societies, experiences, time and space of reading) which should be accounted for. In general, Rosenblatt's theoretical stance on reading and studying fiction was one of authenticity. Unlike Hirsch, she felt that the text could only be appreciated once the reader had breathed life it (Rosenblatt 1978: 121). Rosenblatt also felt that textual responses should be validated in relation to the text and that a 'correct' interpretation (in the form of authorial intention) did not exist.

2.3.2.2 How Rosenblatt's Beliefs Informs Classroom Practice

Giovanelli and Mason's (2015) study offers evidence of how Rosenblatt's reader response theory informs her ideas of a best pedagogical practice. In their study of *The Man Who Shouted Teresa* by Italo Calvino*,* a meta-reading plan (requires students to ask questions about what they are reading, therefore allowing them to experience a process of textual understanding) was formed which split the task into four sections: the reading of the story, initial responses, reflection on the process of reading (with personal response) and building in appropriate context (Giovanelli & Mason 2015: 50). Throughout this process, students were invited to sketch pictures representing their understanding, using previous knowledge and individual experiences to help guide their visual frames. Once they had completed their sketches, students were then given contextual knowledge surrounding the novel (political oppression, fascism) to help guide their responses. Here the students were in control of their own reading experience; they had initially been given the opportunity to engage with the text on their own terms, therefore encouraging them to reflect on their interpretations meta-textually, meta-linguistically and meta-contextually to more fully develop their readings (Giovanelli & Mason 2015: 52).

2.3.2.3 Evaluation of Rosenblatt's Model

Although her ideas of a 'best practice' are drastically different to those of Hirsch, Rosenblatt is especially influential in the field of education. However, whilst teachers and practioners often advocate for the elements of pedagogy that Rosenblatt champions (e.g. personal response, individual interpretations, authenticity), manufactured, teacher-led pedagogies often dominate due to exam pressures. It is clear then that despite elements of Hirsch's 'cultural literacy' model bleeding into literary study, reader response theory and all that it encompasses is often most desired by teachers.

2.3.3. Cremin

Teresa Cremin is a Professor of Education who has contributed profoundly to the field of primary teaching. Her interest in children's imagination, development, engagement and identities as readers, has all manifested into her research. Specifically, championing creativity as pivotal in a best pedagogical practice (Cremin 2015; Cremin et al. 2014; Cremin & Roger 2013).

2.3.3 Cremin's Best Practice

When applying her views and beliefs to the study of fiction, Cremin (2015: 2) recognises the "pressure created by any new or shifting curricula, changing national assessment systems and demands of day-to-day teaching in accountability cultures". She therefore argues that creativity should be incorporated in day-to-day learning in order to add value to students in all aspects of their life (Cremin 2015: 3). Cremin (2015: 3) defines creativity as: being able to think outside the box, taking alternative routes, problem-solving, challenging and taking risks and developing projects and ideas. As well as utilising creativity in project lessons, Cremin (2015: 60) argues for the inclusion of media and technology. Suggesting that they are crucial in developing opportunities for reading for pleasure, especially given the rise of technology and social-media (Cremin et al. 2014: 8).

When exploring pedagogical practice in fiction, Cremin et al. (2014: 11-14) argue in favour of children selecting their own texts, which will encourage personal interest and, in turn, provide students with the motivation to read. Although Cremin et al. (2014: 18) acknowledge that the majority of young people reading above the 'expected level' are reading more traditional texts (fiction, non-fiction), she feels that fostering a love for reading requires opportunities for students to read a range of texts, differing in level, style and genre.

Yet, Cremin's (2015: 10) idea of a 'best practice' also includes the requirement for teachers to have knowledge of children's literature - a feature that was prominent in the UKLA survey 'Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Engaged Readers' (discussed in more depth at Section 5.4). Cremin (2015) feels that 'teacher knowledge of literature' is a requirement for teachers who wish to promote reading for pleasure. She argues that "without a diverse knowledge of children's fiction, teachers are arguably not in a position to be effective" (Cremin 2015: 104)

2.3.3.2 How Cremin's Beliefs Would Inform Classroom Practice

Cremin offers seven elements as the "core features of a creative approach" (2015: 5). These elements are designed with the primary classroom in mind, and so are especially applicable to this thesis. Although Cremin outlines and defines these elements broadly across the curriculum, there are aspects that more closely align to the study of fiction (i.e. foreground potent, affectively engaging texts).

The seven features are (Cremin 2015: 5-10):

1. Profile Meaning and Purpose - This means that teachers must make students aware of the 'real-world relevance' of their learning. This includes "seeking authentic reasons for engaging in literacy activities" and "linguistic features, taught in context and practice through meaningful activities".
2. Foreground Potent, Affectively Engaging Texts - Cremin (2015: 7) feels that in order to affectively engage in play, drama, reading, story-telling, drawing, dance and art students must be given opportunities to develop and understand their individual interests in texts that excite them.

3. Harness Curiosity and Profile Agency - This focuses on ‘student-led’ learning which requires students to take control, ask questions and be imaginative (Cremin 2015: 7).
4. Encourage Collaboration and Making Connections - This is especially applicable to ‘creative project’ based lessons. Here Cremin (2015: 8) supports the use of pair work, small-group activities, class-work, drama, play and partnerships (with parents, authors, dancers, actors).
5. Integrate Reflection, Review, Feedback and Celebration - Criticisms should be used as a form of self-development, reflected on to help students with the creative process. For example, students might re-visit previous pieces of work to highlight their progress or re-draft work to indicate where criticisms have been taken on board (Cremin 2015: 8). She also argues that positive feedback should be encouraged and celebrated where applicable.
6. Take Time to Travel and Teach Skills in Context - Cremin (2015: 9) feels that this is best done through “extended units of work”. This allows students to recognise features such as grammatical skills in the context of their learning. Here they are encouraged to initiate activities and direct the development of their work.
7. Ensure Creative Involvement of the Teacher - Teachers being able to ‘model’ the creative process is what Cremin (2015: 10) feels is a requirement for students to recognise the value of taking risks, directing their own work and therefore developing themselves creatively.

These elements are what Cremin (2015) believes should be used in pedagogical practice to promote creativity and therefore fulfil her vision of a ‘best practice’. Although creativity is a difficult ‘skill’ to define or identity in learning, Cremin (2015) uses her ‘core’ features Cremin (2015) to help make implementing creativity ‘easier’.

2.3.3.3 Evaluation of Cremin’s Model

Cremin’s (2015: 10) idea of a ‘best practice’ - with the additional requirement that teachers acquire appropriate knowledge of children’s literature - therefore includes a ‘practice’ that exists when “creative and informed professionals respond flexibility to current curricula and develop coherent and imaginative approaches, underpinned by pedagogical and subject knowledge and knowledge of individual children”. Whilst creativity is often incorporated into learning, it is often more traditionally done in art, dance, and drama lessons. Instead Cremin (2015) offers an opportunity for teachers to develop the inclusion of creativity, through more ‘mundane’ tasks (e.g. feedback).

2.4 Chapter 2 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that arguments about a ‘best practice’, including what should be taught and how are widely contested. Similarly, in the three models of best practices discussed here – as advocated by Hirsch, Rosenblatt, and Cremin – it is clear that a best practice is not always implemented in education. For example, as seen in Mason and Giovanelli’s (2017) study, whilst features of Hirsch’s ‘best practice’ were often utilised in class, there is evidence to suggest

that such methods are not valued by teachers (Xerri 2013). Certainly, it is difficult for teachers to adopt their preferred practice when education is dominated by policy makers, assessment pressures and an accountability culture.

My own vision for best pedagogical practice is aligned with Rosenblatt (1995; 1978) but also adopts features of 'creative' teaching as suggested by Cremin (2015), because these foster 'reading for pleasure' and reading engagement. To be clear, the elements of a 'best practice' that I feel are important are student-led learning, context, personal response, reading for pleasure and authentic reading.

Rosenblatt's (1978) 'reader response theory' has affinities with, and is affiliated in education research in, cognitive poetics. Accordingly, my own observations concerning best practice in schools is informed by reader response theory and cognitive poetics. As such, in the next chapter, I outline the central frameworks in cognitive poetics that are relevant in education research, particularly with regards to the ethnographic study at the heart of this thesis.

Chapter 3 - Cognitive Poetics

3.1 An Introduction

Highlighting educational policy changes and tracking these changes through to the current NC (see: Chapter 1), has allowed me to discuss the issues that have frequently arisen in English education, with a specific focus on the study of fiction (see Chapter 2). I will now turn to a field that has an interest in both of these elements (e.g. educational policy/current NC and issues currently prevalent in English education). The field I will be discussing is **cognitive poetics**.

To initiate a discussion on this, I will begin by exploring the field in general: its origins, developments, criticisms and what cognitive poetics aims to achieve in its application. This will lead me onto a discussion of how this can be applied; using two frameworks situated within the field of cognitive poetics that will be of immediate interest to my thesis. These two frameworks (**schema theory** and **text-world theory)** will be applied to my data at Chapter 5. After outlining these frameworks, I will detail a case study (Cushing 2018b) demonstrating a previous successful application of cognitive poetics to English studies at secondary level.

3.2 Cognitive Poetics - Origins and Development's

The term 'cognitive poetics' was coined by Reuven Tsur (1971) as part of a study of poetry and perception (see: Tsur 1987; 1992). In its original form cognitive poetics was therefore taken to mean a "systematic account for the relationship between the structure of literary texts and their perceived effects" Tsur (2012: 279). The discipline now referred to as cognitive poetics has diversified, with Stockwell (2002: 8) explaining that the approach is now used to consider various forms of literary craft. Therefore, more broadly defining the field "as a magpie discipline which views reading as 'an object that consists not simply of the autonomous existence of a text, but which arises from the interaction with an observing consciousness [...] literature does not exist unless it is read" (Stockwell 2012, cited in Mason 2019: 12). Cognitive poetics therefore expanded its application, drawing upon theories in cognitive science, psychology and stylistics. Building on these foundations, and applying tenants of each, meant that cognitive poetics radicalised the study of literature. Mason (2019: 69) emphasises this, arguing that a field able to 'borrow' concepts from a range of theorie is innovative. Cognitive poetics is able to move with changing times, adapting itself accordingly and re-shifting itself where applicable.

Specifically, in relating to the study of fiction, Stockwell (2002: 5) felt that a field able to offer a multidisciplinary, cognitively-grounded account of readers' interactions with texts is a radical re-evaluation of the whole process of literary activity. For example, when applied to the reading experience cognitive poetics can: explore interpretation (whether that be an authorly version of the world or a readerly account), offering an account of how these interpretations manifest in the transaction between the reader and the text (see Stockwell 2002: 5-6). By allowing academics an insight into the reading process, cognitive poetics is helping to understand the reader's mind at the time of reading, their process of textual understanding and what they bring to the reading experience. What this

translates to is **context**. Context is an element of cognitive poetics that helps set it apart from other fields. It allows us to view the reading process alongside a plethora of factors such as individual knowledge, experience, emotions and sociocultural context. As such, cognitive poetics is well positioned to attend to many of the facets of a best practice within English education precisely because of its focus on readers as individuals and the context in which they read.

3.2.1 Context as a Key Strength of Cognitive Poetics

Focusing on context and offering an insight into the reader "transaction", stems from work undertaken by Louise Rosenblatt (1995; 1978). Rosenblatt (1995; 1978) advocated for the use of context in understanding individual readers more explicitly. Keeping in-line with the concept of context within cognitive poetics, I will therefore be offering examples to indicate what this looks like in practice (e.g. how and where context is applied in the field). These examples will be focusing on the reading experience and study of literature. For example, Mason (2019: 52) explains that cognitive poetics is able to account for the differences and similarities in reader interpretation, as well as identifying where a reader might have misinterpreted or added validity to their response by straying from, or grounding their views in, reference to the actual text. Attention to context also allows cognitive poetics to offer insights into how emotional responses to literature are formed and are personally affecting (Whiteley 2010; Canning 2017), how readers construct mental representations of characters' minds (Nuttall 2015), how texts activate sympathy, empathy, or resistant response (Harrison & Nuttall 2018; Browse 2019), and how discourse about a text can influence reader interpretations (Giovanelli & Mason 2015).

By encapsulating both the social and personal circumstances of context (Stockwell 2002: 4), cognitive poetics can therefore offer a fuller understanding of the reading process and how the reader has reached their interpretation. This is something especially valuable in the field of education, where cognitive poetics has recently intervened (Cushing 2018a; 2018b; 2018c, Taylor 2018; Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Giovanelli & Mason 2015). Developing a theoretical understanding of the learning process through cognitive poetic accounts of literary experience has enabled teachers to gain a more holistic understanding of a student's reading. When applied in the classroom, cognitive poetics is able to account for, aid and encourage the elements of a 'best practice' identified as especially valuable in English pedagogies (see Section 2.4).

Context can also help differentiate between 'correct' an 'incorrect' textual interpretation. An incorrect textual interpretation occurs when the reader has completely mis-interpreted the emotion's or experience evoked. This is especially useful when cognitive poetics is applied to the field of education, where an 'incorrect' interpretation could have serious consequences. A lack of textual comprehension and misunderstanding could lead to a lack of marks in examinations. Avoiding an 'everything goes' view of textual interpretation is therefore crucial in adding credibility to the field. This is something that Rosenblatt (1978; 1995) also sought to address in her discussions of reader response theory (see Section 2.3.2).

Discussing the implications of a 'wrong' interpretation, Stockwell (2002: 4) uses an example from the poem 'The Lost Leader' by Robert Browning (1845) which focused on William Wordsworth. Stockwell (2002) argues that a 'wrong interpretation' is feasible, and more likely to occur in relation to a text based on historical fact rather than invented subject matter. For example, if someone was to argue that 'The Lost Leader' referenced Milton or Coleridge, they would be historically inaccurate (Stockwell 2002: 3) and their interpretation would therefore be 'incorrect'. However, in considering context we can account for interpretations that are more circumstantial (e.g. context - personal emotions evoked, experiences that alter the way we view the text).

3.3 Criticisms

Despite the strengths outlined above, cognitive poetics is not without its criticisms. Stockwell (2002) argues that there are **two** main accusations levelled at the field. The **first** portrays cognitive poetics as "a highly limiting, deterministic approach, deeming many interpretations as invalid" (Stockwell 2002: 7). In this view, a cognitive poetic analysis unearths patterns that might have been subconscious or not noticed at all (Stockwell 2002: 7). Although it can be argued that this offers a new interpretation, it might also suggest that some interpretations are only available to analysts who have a specialist knowledge of cognitive poetics. In turn, this would therefore suggest that previous and lay interpretations are faulty or invalid (Stockwell 2002: 7).

The **second** criticism of cognitive poetics considers it to be "an infinitely open, and non-predictive framework which in allowing any interpretation at all ends up being a model of nothing very substantial" (Stockwell 2002: 7). In this view, cognitive poetics is situated as an aid to rationalise and explain how readers reach certain understandings (Stockwell 2002: 7). This would place the framework as having no predictive power, something often required for a sustainable theory/framework. Put simply, this refers to the concept of a 'right' or 'wrong' interpretation, which I have discussed at Section 3.2.1 (in relation to context). This is something Rosenblatt (1978; 1995) and Hirsch (1988) also debate (see Chapter 2).

To help resolve these criticisms, Stockwell (2002) argues that a distinction can be made between 'reading' and 'interpretation'. Reading is defined as "the process of arriving at a solid understanding of the text that is personally acceptable" and interpretation as "what occurs as we move through the text, so a process of mistakes, errors" (p8). Aligning with Rosenblatt (1978), Stockwell (2002) argues that using these terms, means an 'interpretation' can be 'incorrect', not a 'reading'. When applying these terms (reading and interpretation) as defined by Stockwell (2002), this would mean that cognitive poetics can track a reader's interpretation - how they formed meaning, what contextual factors helped them reach this interpretation - through to the development and progress of their reading (an understanding of the text deemed viable).

3.4 Cognitive Poetic Frameworks

Within this thesis, I have selected two frameworks from the field of cognitive poetics (schema theory and text-world theory). Based on pre-existing research (Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Giovanelli & Mason 2015) my idea of a 'best practice' (student-led learning, context, personal response, reading for pleasure and authentic reading) and my research aims (see Introduction), these frameworks are most applicable.

3.4.1 Schema Theory

Schema theory first appeared in the work of Kant (1787) who "developed the idea that people's experiences are collected together in memory and that these collections are defined by common elements" (Thorndyke & Yekovich 1980: 25). From this, the theory developed through advancements in artificial intelligence, psychological studies of memory for prose, psychological work in education (Piaget 1926) and story recall (Bartlett 1932). These developments allowed schema theory to progress further resulting in an extension of its application in fields such as psychology, cognitive science, computer science and education. In addition to its success in these fields, schema theory has showed real potential within cognitive poetics (Gibbons 2016; Bell 2014; Gavins and Steen 2003; Stockwell 2002; Cook 1994).

In its contemporary form, schema theory is described as offering insight into how prior knowledge is organised in the mind; offering an explanation for how this information is stored, adapted or dispelled (Mason 2019). Each 'schema', then, is essentially a bundle of knowledge stored in the individual's mind (Giovanelli & Mason 2018b: 71). As there is no disputing that new information encountered engages and interacts with prior knowledge: this aspect of the theory remains largely untouched across time and different disciplinary fields.

Schema theory has been used in cognitive poetics in several ways. For example, schema theory can explain why individuals have high degrees of overlap in their individual interpretations (Mason 2019: 66), how we understand and have ideas about places we have not visited or things we have not seen (Gibbons & Whiteley 2018: 176) and how individuals with similar schematic knowledge of particular topics or situations can still form different interpretations (Mason 2019: 70). Following Mason (2019), I will offer a more detailed illustration of schema theory using the example of beaches. If I was to ask a group of individuals to visualise a beach in their mind, they would each have different ideas of what this might include. Although there are particular aspects that would remain the same (water, sand, the sand appearing before the water) there would be differences depending on the individuals 'beach schema'. For example, some (living in sunnier countries) might describe soft-white sand, with tranquil blue water and others (rarely visiting the beach or those never holidaying abroad) might describe pebbled sand, with murky water. There could even be instances whereby an individual who has never visited the beach, would be able to account for particular aspects, even possibly imagining a bucket and spade, sun-beds, sand-castles and beach balls. This is because a person does not have to visit a place to have a mental imagine in their mind (Gibbons & Whiteley 2018). Instead their 'mental' image' could be

formed by what they have seen on TV or in a film, what they have heard from others, or even associations learnt unknowingly (e.g. sand must be placed within the bucket and spade to make a sandcastle). By evidencing the range of interpretations and circumstances that can occur during a simple visualisation of a 'beach', we are able to identify how schema theory can apply to our understanding of this.

A particularly salient application of these ideas from schema theory focuses on how this interaction between new and prior knowledge is enacted in relation to reading and thinking about stories. As such, I now turn to work on 'narrative schemas'.

3.4.2 Narrative Schemas

As we read, we draw on our pre-existing knowledge and experiences in order to evoke certain emotions, interpretations or understandings. Narrative schemas account for this process by trying to understand what a reader has drawn upon throughout their reading. Narrative schema theory is therefore a strand of 'schema theory' that focuses solely on the study and discussion of literature. Indeed, in relation to literary texts, previous work in cognitive poetics has used schema theory to account for reading in the classroom (Giovanelli & Mason 2015), the interaction of a reader's mental faculties (memories, emotions, beliefs) during reading (Stockwell 2002: 75), to understand the knowledge a reader brings to visual representations of what they have read (Cushing 2018a) and to account for the information drawn upon during reading (Mason 2019).

3.4.3 Enhancements to Narrative Schema

I will now be outlining the key metalanguage that is attached to schema theory, which I will systematically apply within data analysis. I will therefore define the following aspects within the up-coming sections: headers and schema evolution (accretion, tuning, restructuring, refreshment, preservation).

3.4.3.1 Headers

Headers are aspects of a text that activate a schema appropriate to what is being read or understood. For example, if you were aware that 'dementors' were fictional creatures in *Harry Potter*, seeing the word 'dementors' within a text is likely to act as a header and activate your *Harry Potter* schema. Headers can be any aspect of the text that we encounter (characters, objects, actions, scenes) (Gibbons & Whiteley 2018: 178). By helping to identify which schema an individual draws upon during their reading, Giovanelli and Mason (2018b: 72) argue that headers can also help discredit the idea that our mind is "disorganised chaos".

3.4.3.2 Schema Evolution

In real-life scenarios and literary events, our schemas dynamically evolve. To evolve or adapt our schemas, Stockwell (2002: 79) defines the three ways this is likely to occur:

1. Accretion - The addition of new facts to our schema,
2. Tuning - The modification of facts or relations,
3. Restructuring - The creation of new schemas.

These are the most basic forms of schema evolution and can continually happen as we process and understand what we are reading. However, there are times when our schemas are not dramatically 'changing'. For example, when we already have strong schematic knowledge of a particular topic of theme, the addition of new facts would simply reiterate or revise what we already know. This is what is called "schema refreshment" or "schema preservation" (Stockwell 2002: 79-80).

3.4.4 Criticisms of Schema Theory

Despite outlining the key components of the theory, all of which appear to work well in their application (see Cushing 2018a; Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Giovanelli & Mason 2015), it is not without its criticisms. In 1980, Thorndyke and Yekovich discussed criticisms surrounding the theory. Though dated, several of these concepts remain un-resolved. Whilst Thorndyke and Yekovich (1980) outline four key criticisms (e.g. plausibility, description, prediction, testability), I have chosen to focus on the two deemed most problematic. I have chosen to focus on: **prediction** and **testability**, as these are most prevalent in schema research today. They are also the most potentially problematic with regards to my research. I will begin by offering up an explanation as to why these areas are scrutinised in schema theory, which will lead into my reasoning as to how I will 'acknowledge' these issues in my research.

3.4.4.1 Prediction

For any theory to appear credible it must be able to make predictions about the types of data encountered, or how this data has come about (with regards to schema theory for instance, this might relate to predicting how a reader will interpret a text). As schema theory is data-led (the theory is applied after the data is collected), it has difficulties meeting these criteria. Mason (2019: 66-67) cites a study by Bartlett (1932) to highlight the importance of prediction in schema theory and the difficulties that can arise when research is unable to meet these criteria.

Bartlett (1932) applied schema theory to participant recollection of the novel *The War of Ghosts* by George Mann (a western folktale). Bartlett (1932) found that when the participants encountered unusual textual aspects, they would often replace this information by drawing on their pre-existing 'fairy-tale' schemas. He felt that as certain aspects of the novel had decayed from their memory, participants were using their more prototypical fairy-tale knowledge to replace the unusual features in the text. Whilst these are predictions made by the researcher they are not 'plausible' in the sense that they are guesses - we cannot know for sure that this was what was occurring in the reader's mind during Bartlett's (1932) study. As well as reading comprehension as a whole, schema theory's lack of predictive power also extends to reader's understanding of new or unusual words. Thorndyke and Yekovich (1980: 40) argue that words unfamiliar to a reader are often placed in a categorized list to recall later. Yet, it is often the case that a new

or unusual word is misremembered (until encountered again) as it does not conform to a typical structure.

Over the years work has been done to apply the theory to more unusual text types (to help expand its use and therefore predictability). However, we are still unable to predict for certain what will occur (especially with regards to reader interpretation). Whilst more work consequently needs to be done to make predictions that are difficult to dispute, schema theory's application to my research is still robust and appropriate: my aim is not to predict what a reader will interpret but rather to provide an account of textual understanding. As such, the issue of predictability is not relevant to my research.

3.4.4.2 Testability

Testability suggests that a theory must be able to explain outcomes, adapt to data and be vulnerable to alternative outcomes (Thorndyke & Yekovich 1980). Yet, schema theory is unable to always accurately suggest what schema is being drawn upon (since it could be one of thousands). Whilst we are able to account for schema management (refreshment, tuning, accretion) - which help to aid our understanding of how readers adapt to new information - we are still no closer to understanding how schemas are organised within the mind. This makes it extremely difficult to suggest 'how' and 'why' a reader arrived at any particular interpretation. Whilst testability is an important criterion, Mason (2019: 68-69) argues that it does not need to be an issue in every field that schema theory sits within and cognitive poetic analysis, as a transparent and data-driven approach, 'tests' the theory in the very act of application. Mason (2019) argues that acquiring a general idea of how a child has reached textual understanding, and an awareness of this process (to be utilised by the teacher) is enough for the field, which 'tests' the efficacy of the theory through application.

Schema theory is thus an ideal lens through which to view and analyse my data and will be applied systematically in Chapter Five. To complement to this, I will draw on elements of Text World Theory.

3.4.5 Text World Theory

Text World Theory (TWT) was first formulated in the late 1980's and early 1900's by Paul Werth who set out the basic principles of the theory. His death in 1995, however, meant that the theory was not, at least initially, developed far beyond Werth's original vision (Gavins 2007: 6). Werth (cited in Gavins 2007: 7) had claimed that the theory would be able to account for the cognitive processes behind all human communication. Whilst this drew close attention from theorists, Werth had only ever considered literary texts and so work was required to extend the scope of his original investigation. Over the 21st century then, research advanced TWT.

By focusing on how our mental representations are generated by language use, Gavins (2007) argued that contextual information (wider surroundings, personal knowledge, previous experience) contributed. Context is therefore especially useful for TWT in postulating how our mental representations are formed in the

mind (Gavins 2007: 6). This is especially useful when applying TWT to textual understanding (specifically when chosen alongside schema theory) as it is able to account for the variation of knowledge individuals bring to the reading experience. When moving into the metalanguage attached to TWT, I will be able to offer a clearer insight into the methods used to account for reader interpretation.

I will therefore be introducing TWT's three main methods within the up-coming sections:

1. World building elements
2. Function advancing propositions
3. World-switches

Structurally they will be placed under two key heading's: discourse worlds and text-worlds (which are the two main levels within TWT).

3.4.5.1 Discourse Worlds

The discourse world is one of the two main levels referenced above. Discourse worlds are required to help construct text-worlds, further helping the individual to develop and understand the discourse presented. A discourse world occurs when two (or more) people are interacting, bringing with them a series of contextual factors. For example, if two people are discussing the weather as they walk through the park, they are seeing and hearing one another, whilst accepting information relevant for the subject of their conversation (e.g. how rainy it is). As the interaction (between at least one or more human participants) progresses, context is utilised to help the participants build their mental representations of the discourse world (Gavins 2007: 9). Discourse worlds can also form when the participants do not share the same time or location. Whilst face-to-face interaction would include spoken dialogue as the main point of interaction, reading would include the written text (Gibbons & Whiteley 2018: 222). This is what Gavins (2007) called "a split-world". Which means the participants are separate in time and location, as with reading (e.g. author and reader).

Once the discourse world has been formed, context and communication eventually progress, and more is required for the participants to process the interaction. Here is where our mental representations are built up, to represent 'text worlds'. Before I begin a discussion on 'text worlds' I will be using an example taken from Giovanelli & Mason (2018b: 83). To develop the park example, suppose the two friends are now having a discussion about their brothers buying last-minute Christmas presents at the shopping centre last week. This aspect of the conversation is a specific topic, whereby the time, place, characters and object are not in the present discourse-world. Each individual must build a mental representation based on the conversation and it is here is where text-worlds begin to form.

3.4.5.2 Text-Worlds

Building a text-world entails a series of steps, which Stockwell (2002: 137) explains by outlining the two main processes: world-building elements (time, place, objects, characters) and function advancing propositions (propositions that

propel the novel forward). These elements are often required to transition from a discourse-world to a text-world.

Though all worlds are identified as 'text-worlds', world switches offer an opportunity to categorise the shift between them. The three world switches, which Stockwell (2002) highlights in depth (see p140-141), are: deictic (flashbacks or flashforwards) attitudinal (alternations due to desires, beliefs, or purpose) and epistemic (hypothetical worlds). When a world-switch occurs, a new text-world is created (Giovanelli & Mason 2018b). World switches can be caused by a (as outlined by Giovanelli & Mason 2018b: 88):

1. Temporal Shift - A switch in narrative time.
2. Spatial Shift - A switch in narrative location.
3. Direct Speech - Realised through quoted speech, with a reporting clause that shifts the attention to a new perspective. Where processing the speech involves shifting to a new deictic centre of the speaker.
4. Modality - Occurs when we are presented with modal verbs, adjectives adverbs or clauses that draw attention to a particular attitude given towards actions, events or characters.
5. Negation - Requires the individual to conceptualise a remote world containing the positive counterpart that is then understood as negated.

Because any text or discourse can entail multiple world switches, text-world generation can become complex. An analytical solution for this is to visualise the process using text-world diagrams.

3.4.6 Text World Theory in Reading

Text-worlds, though not real, can often feel real to a reader. As with schema theory, text-world theory can account for the feelings, emotions and experiences we bring to the reading experience and why we can so vividly visualise characters, events, or scenes. For example, TWT can account for why we have emotional connections with particular fictional-characters or events (Nuttall 2015), the process of student's reading comprehension (Cushing 2018a) and how children use language and contextual information (influences, experiences) to create texts (Taylor 2019).

3.4.7 Criticisms of Text-World Theory

Though TWT is relatively new, there are disputes centred around its similarities to pre-existing theories. Such as schema theory (Gibbons 2016a; Bell 2014), mental space theory and possible worlds theory. Yet, as TWT was created in-line with the field of cognitive poetics, these similarities are crucial. For example, in circumstances where TWT cannot explain or correctly identify which aspect of the text (world-building element) was used to process a new text-world, schema theory is able to help account for the experiences drawn upon. Which in turn offers an insight into the triggers aiding a rich mental representation (e.g. through the use of headers or intertextual links). In cognitive poetics, we are therefore able to use the strengths of particular theories and frameworks to account for the weaknesses in others. This is made possible because each framework in cognitive poetics has a 'similar' cognitive foundation and usually value context.

3.4.8 The Benefits of Schema Theory and Text World Theory

Both TWT and Schema Theory can be seen as analytical tools that enable focus on more than 'the language' or 'individual words'. They are able to explore the mind of the reader, the text as a whole and the entire literary experience. These approaches enable consideration of the process of reading, from the moment an individual selects a text to their incremental individual interpretations, emotions, and thoughts experienced throughout, to their eventual understanding after they have finished reading. Both TWT and schema theory, are therefore able to explore the reading experience, with ideal focus and descriptive detail to make them excellent analytical tools for this research.

3.5 The Application of Cognitive Poetics to Education

Cognitive poetics and its clear value in analysing the reading process has been especially useful in the field of education. By offering academics the opportunity to gain insight into the reader's mind, cognitive poetics is able to highlight the potential of personal response, reading for pleasure and individual interpretations. In other words, all of the key aspects of reading in schools that this research wishes to explore. Cognitive poetics can therefore be valuable as both an analytical tool and a 'lens' through which teachers can gain a more thorough insight into their students' reading. To evidence its appropriacy for analysing school reading practices, I offer a case study which applies TWT within a KS3 poetry lesson. This study was chosen as it focuses on one of my frameworks (TWT), reiterating what cognitive poetic frameworks can unearth during literature studies and what it can offer the teacher.

3.5.1 Case Study - Ian Cushing (2018b)

By applying text-world theory to a KS3 poetry lesson, Cushing (2018b) was able to showcase how a "concept driven pedagogical tool" (cognitive poetics) could allow students to build on their KS2 grammatical knowledge in a new, innovative way. The poem's title*, A Jelly Fish* by Marianne Moore, was used as the focus of lesson planning and key elements of text-world theory (previously taught to the students) were utilised throughout. Whilst the students discussed their initial perceptions of the poem, the title was concealed. It was crucial that teachers did not interject at this stage, even where "incorrect" interpretations were forming (Cushing 2018b: 9). Once the title was revealed, students were able to alter their interpretations, accordingly, using sketches of their text-worlds to visualise this process. By removing the pressures and potential power imbalance (see Xerri 2013) from their reading experience, students were able to enjoy the 'journey'. They had more opportunities to discuss their own mental representations and as a result were more confident identifying grammatical features in relation to authorial effect (Cushing 2018b: 12). As well as offering the teacher an insight into the importance of grammar in context and student-led interpretations Cushing (2018b) was also able to identify the schematic and background knowledge students had brought to the reading experience (for example, a drawing of a vivid sea scene despite a lack of detail in the poem).

Empowering students with the responsibility and validity of their own responses, and experiences was crucial in ensuring engagement was high (Cushing 2018b). Using text-world theory as a lens through which to view the reading process helped to identify how student understanding developed. Thus, allowing the teacher an insight into the value of differing responses and acknowledging that they were 'able' to take a back-seat.

3.6 Cognitive Poetic Frameworks - Conclusion

TWT and schema theory both share promise in educational research (Taylor 2018; Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Cushing 2018a; Cushing 2018b; Giovanelli & Mason 2015). As both frameworks utilise context they are able to account for many aspects of the reading experience. For Stockwell (2002) the value of this is in the knowledge that different people will have different ideas about what literature does for them. He argues that "when I ask what the poem means, I am really asking what the poem does, which is another way of asking what it is being used for, meaning then is what literature does. Meaning is use" (Stockwell 2002: 4). Being able to recognise individual contextual factors can therefore help account for reader differences. Yet, it is important to recognise that cognitive poetics is also able to account for similarities in reader interpretation, which are underwritten by the shared nature of human existence and the universal nature of cognitive processes.

This chapter has allowed me to introduce my chosen frameworks, which is especially useful when they are applied later on during data analysis. Prior to this, I will offer an insight into my research design, my chosen method (including strengths and weaknesses), the procedures I followed and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.1 My Study

Using what I have outlined as the key tenets of a best practice (within classrooms promoting an authentic reading experience), I wanted to undertake this research study in a school that shared my pedagogical aspirations for personal response, reading for pleasure and authentic reading.

As part of this work, I wanted to explore all aspects of the institution (school) and experience all aspects of the students' learning. That is, I did not want my input to be restricted to literacy lessons. I wanted to become a figure the teacher felt she could trust and I wanted to establish a relationship with the students so that I was able to gain authentic insights into their reading experiences, interests, and understandings. As such, I determined an ethnographic approach was best suited to this research.

4.2 Ethnography

Ethnography has been used by researchers in many disciplines, including anthropology, education, sociology and social sciences. In its simplest form ethnography is taken to mean a "principled effort to describe the everyday, cultural life of a social group" (Bloome 2012: 9). With foundations in cultural, social and psychological anthropology, ethnography "seeks to understand what is happening, what it means and its significance to the social group" (Bloome 2012: 9). Ethnography ultimately allows us to become immersed in an environment, where we can begin to contemplate the "how" and most importantly the "why". This often involves methods such as: participant observation, taking field notes, open-ended interviewing, the collection of artefacts and recordings (Bloome 2012: 11). Ethnography is able to identify features deemed the 'norm' in the researched space, and analyse this within the context of the environment (something it does that no other methodological approach can).

4.2.1 Classroom Ethnography

The 'classroom' is typically the space within a school where the majority of formal learning takes place, however classroom ethnography does not restrict itself to this space alone. Bloome (2012: 18) argues that by exploring the classroom space and aspects of it that would usually seem meaningless (e.g. class layout, furniture, timings), we are able to see how they connect with spaces and instructions outside of the classroom environment. For example, additional knowledge of the school and immersion in spaces beyond the classroom (e.g. school library, playground, afterschool clubs) can offer an account that is more thorough and therefore more genuine. Put simply, classroom ethnography requires a researcher to become immersed in all aspects that contribute to the class's culture. Context is therefore pivotal for anyone seeking to apply ethnography, whether that be in the school or any other field of work.

In practice, then, classroom ethnography offers an opportunity to explore 'mundane' aspects such as day-to-day tasks or timings (of particular activities or

tasks). Yet, rather than simply labelling these features, ethnography offers an account as to why they are interesting. For example, understanding why the class is laid out for group activities, with space to freely move around, could be indicative of the teacher's or school's philosophical stance on learning. By interacting with aspects of the classroom that do not immediately appear of huge importance, I will be able to develop a more thorough understanding of more complex tasks, choices and aspects of the class.

4.3 Criticisms of Ethnography

Ethnography is not without its criticisms however. Key concerns include: ethical issues, fear of bad publicity (for example, if the institution you work with reveals potentially negative findings, this could be damaging to their image), growing demand for research to be accountable, time-restraints and high-workloads (Hammersley 2018: 2-3). This section deals with the two critiques of this approach that are of relevance to this research: **definitions** and **time**.

4.3.1 Definitions

As it is so extensively applied, there is no agreed definition of ethnography, which Hammersley (2018: 1) argues leaves the field open to uncertainty, lack of agreement and opportunities for critics to easily discredit its value and justification. However, whilst it is true that there are no shortage of definitions, there are specific elements that are commonly agreed upon as being of central concern to the ethnographer, including culture, personal engagement, and the study of people and society (see: Hammersley 2018 4). By following a clear set of idea's (culture, personal engagement, study of people, exploring society) and making a conscious decision (prior to the study) about what methods I would be using (participant observation, visual examples, field notes) the field's lack of definition was a limitation I was able to overcome (see Pahl 2012).

4.3.2 Time

Time is frequently discussed in relation to ethnography, both in terms of debates surrounding the length of observation and also the imposition on the individual researcher's time relative to other methodological approaches (Hammersley 2018). Again, however, whilst Walford (2009) is rather specific in his determination about how long an ethnography must last ("months"), others such as Hammersley (2018: 4) are more vague ("relatively long-term data collection"). Nevertheless, both are in general agreement that ethnography requires more substantial time than other approaches.

Disagreements on 'observation time' are particularly evident when exploring research that has taken years. Walford (2003: 5) discussed several academics who had published work (based on years of ethnography) and used them to highlight the implications of having too much data. For example, Palmer's (1998) research into "class, gender and ethnicity in a comprehensive school" was based on research conducted in the mid 1980's. Walford (2003: 5) felt that "by the time such studies are published, so much else is likely to have changed that no direct recommendations for action can be made". Yet, advancements in technology has

allowed researchers to process and analyse a large corpus of data far quicker than when these critiques were being made.

My MA research was undertaken full-time in one academic year (2018-19) and therefore my time was inevitably restricted. I needed to ensure I had the time to gain ethical consent, find a willing institution, analyse my data, write this up and also amend suggested changes. I, therefore, collected data for as long a period of time as was realistically practical.

4.4. Why Ethnography?

Despite some legitimate critiques, ethnography clearly remains the best methodological approach to adopt for this research. I favour arguments made by Bloome (2012), who felt that by underpinning ethnographic research with a more theoretical stance, we could establish the research practice further, making it easy to justify and define the purpose of studies adopting this approach.

4.5 Methods and Data

Throughout my data collection, I therefore used ethnographic methods that I felt were most applicable. These methods were:

- producing a visual copy of the class layout,
- noting down day-to-day timings for particular tasks and activities,
- exploring mundane tasks (such as students tidying up, selecting a place to read, sitting for snack and story)
- participating as a class teaching assistant,
- taking field notes about all aspects that appeared to be of interest,
- observing students in spaces beyond the classroom (e.g. in the playground),
- photographing students' work, and aspects related to reading (for example, reading logs - see Appendix 1)

To select the methods I felt would be most relevant and suitable for my research, I had discussions with previous ethnographers and explored studies focusing specifically on classroom ethnography. For example, I drew on concepts of 'space' made by Bloome (2012) when deciding to focus on the class and school layout. Pahl's (2012) approach to ethnography was also instrumental in helping me decide on the appropriate methods. Pahl (2012) undertook an ethnographic study focusing on literary events and practices, with a close look at children's multi-modal text-making and the process of this. During data collection student work was photographed, tasks were observed and Pahl's (2012) findings were partnered and aligned with the teacher's own notes. In particular the methods used during the children's' box-making tasks (photographs, discussions with the children, talk analysis) unearthed interesting findings I felt related to schema theory. For example, Pahl (2012: 107) found that "children drew on local knowledge to flesh out information they had gathered from the internet about their environments. Many children drew on trips to the seaside to articulate how they saw their ocean environments. Everyday life was seeping into the making of the boxes". Being able to recognise the individual knowledge and context each child

brings to their understanding of the task is particularly important in reading. It allows us to gain a more comprehensive idea about the process children go through to gain an 'accurate' understanding. I also chose to participate and help as a class assistant to gain further insight from the children (an idea inspired from Milstein 2010).

4.5.1 My Study

The study was conducted from the months of June to July, with additional visits made throughout May. I attended the school around 3 days a week (a mixture of full mornings and afternoons) and participated in all lessons. I was at the school for around 65 hours across around 21 visits. This does not include the time I spent with other teachers or leadership, or the school tour I received. During my time in classes I spoke to students about their work, the lesson, their reading (if relevant) and helped as a teaching assistant with all subject tasks (Maths, Literacy, Reading). For both my morning and afternoon visits I would visit the teacher before the students arrived and we discussed the structure of the day, the upcoming lesson plans, my current findings and how I was finding it.

As detailed in Chapter 5, I worked with an 'immersive' school already advocating for the features of authenticity I found were crucial. I therefore began data collection by noting down all aspects of the school environment - this included: initial discussions with the teacher about my aims, research concepts and what my ethnographic study would involve, her thoughts on reading and 'immersive' teaching, and information/drawings about the class layout, structure, timings and day-to-day tasks.

To generate my field notes I followed a systematic procedure which involved me noting down information during and after my visits and discussing interesting points with the teacher. Reflecting on my notes and selecting the appropriate information, examples and class work to focus on was an on-going process whereby initial notes would be followed up with research comments I felt were of interest. This would involve connections I made within the classroom (i.e. Oliver and his assessments comments, detailed in section 5.9.2, were best explained with regards to pre-figuring) or connections I made at a later date (i.e. the relevance and value of snack and story, detailed in section 5.3.7). As my time at the school was limited, I consciously made a decision to avoid interviews or recordings as I felt this could potentially remove the natural relationships I had established with the students and teacher. Though I had 'general discussions' with other teachers and members of the school's leadership team, and there was a clear purpose in my enquiries, I did not bring interview questions or record these conversations.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

As my study involved working with 'vulnerable groups' (people under the age of 16) (Denscombe 2017: 338), I followed a rigorous process of ethical consideration to ensure all Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) guidelines were adhered to. In preparation, I therefore completed two Ethics courses (1 and 2),

as well as a full ethics form outlining the steps, I would follow to ensure my study was ethically sound. This form was checked by my Director of Studies, and ultimately approved by SHU Ethics Committee.

A DBS check was completed and approved prior to data collection. I also had a discussion with the school's leadership to explain my involvement with the students (to ensure my work was in line with safeguarding procedures). I began my discussions with the leadership by explaining the nature of my work and what I would be doing with the data. For example, no names, images of students, or identifiable features of the school would be used. Whilst the students' involvement was instrumental to the study, my focus was not on their academic success, nor was their day-to-day school experience altered in any way. Instead the focus was on the school's reading programme, their notions of reading and how this translated into their students. It was therefore decided the school would offer consent for the students in loco parentis - a practice I felt was far more suitable with regards to the students (who would likely struggle to understand a form or theoretical explanation of the nature of my study).

Whilst the school managed the formal aspect of ethical consent, the students were not excluded from this process. Instead of engaging them with the typical procedure of reading participant information and filling out forms they were unlikely to comprehend I instead constantly monitored each student's willingness to participate and adjusted my own behaviour accordingly. For example, on the first day of data collection I introduced myself and informed the students that I was interested in their reading. Throughout my time in class, the majority of children were eager to discuss their reading with me. However, there were instances whereby I went to chat with students who I felt did not want to have a discussion with me, I therefore noted these students and made clear to students enquiring about the study that they did not need to talk about their reading with me if they did not want to.

'Good' ethical practice was therefore less a singular process and more something I considered throughout my entire thesis. I continually allowed the students to have ethical control. So, if a student enquired about what I was doing or said they didn't want me to use what they had said/their work I would be open and honest about the intentions of my study and remove their involvement accordingly. I also made sure to use language appropriate to their age (i.e. I'm interested in talking about your reading and your work, is that alright? or do you have any more questions?). Practicing this throughout meant that 'in loco parentis' was more in-line with a consideration of student involvement. I therefore continued to remain ethically considerate both prior to the study (making a decision on what was best for everyone involved), during the study (discussions with students and having an awareness of those less interested), and at the end of the study (evaluating which facts, details, and quotes to keep).

Other ways I ensured this study was ethically considerate included, ensuring participant anonymity, keeping statistical information about the school generalised (to avoid traceability), removing information I gathered that I felt was particularly personal, anonymising all work, taking no photographs of students and giving all participants involved in the study pseudonyms (name change).

Chapter 5 – Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

Although cognitive poetics has been applied extensively to secondary education, mostly at Year 7 (Cushing 2018a; Cushing 2018c; Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Giovanelli & Mason 2015), teachers generally are not familiar with cognitive poetics unless they have previously studied it (e.g. as part of an English degree). Moreover, cognitive poetics has yet to be applied to the study of fiction at primary. The work represented in this thesis is therefore original in its application of cognitive poetics to primary school education.

Secondary school students in Year 7 (typically ages 10 to 11) are at an age whereby they are capable of developing an understanding of 'stylistics based' frameworks and exam pressures are not directly looming. This means that teachers are entrusted with more freedom to apply, develop and test students' understanding. This has therefore enabled teachers to experiment with cognitive poetic frameworks, particularly given that in the 5 years between Year 7 and Year 11, students are in a far better position to apply what they have learnt to their GCSE exams (see Cushing 2018b). However, at primary school, more difficulties arise when working with cognitive poetic frameworks. In KS1, students are still developing their phonics and learning how to read. Even once students within KS1 have acquired the skill of 'decoding' words (to be able to fluently read) as they move into KS2, SATS pressure are evident and reading is often developed in relation to comprehension and grammar.

For my ethnographic study, I therefore wanted a school that aligned with the style of teaching advocated by Rosenblatt (1978; 1995). Not only does this align with my idea of a 'best practice', but its emphasis on 'reading for pleasure', authentic reading and personal response would provide more scope for the integration of cognitive poetic concepts in teaching. I was fortunate to find such a school.

5.2 The School, Class and Teacher in my Study

My study took place in a Sheffield school rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted with students between the ages of 9-10 (year 5). It is an 'immersive school' of a standard size, with approximately 400-500 students. The percentage of students attending the school with SEN (special educational needs) and/or disabilities was "above average". The school was within a 'low-income area', so the social background of students was generally working-class. Ethnically, the school was varied, with the majority of students coming from English as an Additional Language (EAL) backgrounds. Prior to starting my study, I toured the school and met with leadership to get a more thorough understanding of the school's ethos.

The class was a standard UK class size (30) and was split evenly with 15 female and 15 male students. 4 of the students were classed as having special educational needs (SEN), each varying in detail. I sat in maths, literacy, reading and project lessons, acting as a teaching assistant throughout. I joined the students on the playground, chatted to them in-between breaks, attended

assemblies, and met with other members of staff (other teachers and higher management).

The teacher had been teaching for 2 years and was currently job-sharing with a Trainee Teacher (TT). I joined half way through the term and so the TT was finishing her last week of teaching. The teacher I worked with appeared very passionate about teaching; she believed that value of reading came from its importance in a student's entire life, not just during their education, and that the school's style of teaching implemented reading well. She loved the freedom she was given and recognised that this was a privilege compared to the situation in many other UK schools. In general, her beliefs and ideas about reading, and teaching were aligned with the school's ethos.

5.2.1 Special Educational Needs (SEN)

An SEN student has a learning difficulty or disability that requires additional support and moderation to enable equal opportunities for learning. As outlined above, there were four SEN students in the class I worked with. I did not ask for specific information about their educational needs, nor did I enquire about SEN students prior to the start of data-collection. Where it was clear who the SEN students were, I made sure to discuss their understanding or reading comprehension as I would the other students. I was not exploring SEN students explicitly; therefore, I viewed their learning through the tasks given rather than through any additional support they received.

Within the class, SEN students were often taken out of class for additional support or one-to-one sessions. When they remained in class, the teacher would often create activities that differed in style (i.e. producing two sheets differing in level). The most recent Ofsted report explained the school was inclusive in their approach and therefore **all** students thrived.

5.2.2 Pupil Voice

Students were very integrated into the school environment. They were invited to input where applicable – both within the classroom and throughout the school. Students had huge freedom within their 'project-based learning' and each class had an elected 'spokesperson' to advocate on behalf of their peers on the 'school council', which discusses issues students have and things they wish to change or add. The school displays also indicated pupil voice. Students' work was displayed, with school 'pets' named by the students, and additional outside input incorporated such as 'adopting' and naming a 'guide dog'.

5.2.3 Parental Input

Parents also have the opportunity to be very involved with the school. They are often invited to help with raising money (such as, school fairs, raffles) to fund things such as the school library. They also have access to a 'school newsletter' which is published each week to highlight important information about upcoming events in school, class attendance scores, awards and the student chosen as 'reader of the week' (this is where a student is picked from each class, for

excelling in a reading related activity; for example, producing great book reviews or reading presentations). All newsletters are archived online so that parents and students can access previous issues.

5.2.5 The Curriculum

The school's curriculum was generally in line with NC requirements, though content was specifically designed to be 'immersive'. The school year is split into three terms, named 'Discover' 'Explore' and 'Create'. During each term, a 'big question' is set – often related to real-world problems (for example, can we always believe our eyes?) – and feeds into appropriate subject lessons. This begins once students have completed the Read Write Inc. phonics scheme (a programme designed to help reading fluency and speed). During their project lessons, students are encouraged to develop themselves creatively across a range of different media outlets (image, collage), a strategy that fits with the ideas of Mallet (2017: 111) and Cremin et al. (2014: 8) (discussed in Chapter 2). With the use of media and technology, students were also encouraged to take risks and partner their experiences with their learning. Project lessons are therefore like a journey, whereby students are able to develop, adapt and finesse their work over a period of time.

It is important to note that the 'big question' is not always incorporated into every lesson. It is not forced onto subjects or topics that would not fit. For example, most language focused 'English' work connected to the 'big question', however reading did not. Selecting texts that connect with the 'big question' is likely to be difficult and the termly change of the question leaves additional difficulties (time restraints, not finishing the novel, teacher work-load). However, **all** subjects are in-line with the school's ethos and subjects are therefore all taught immersively.

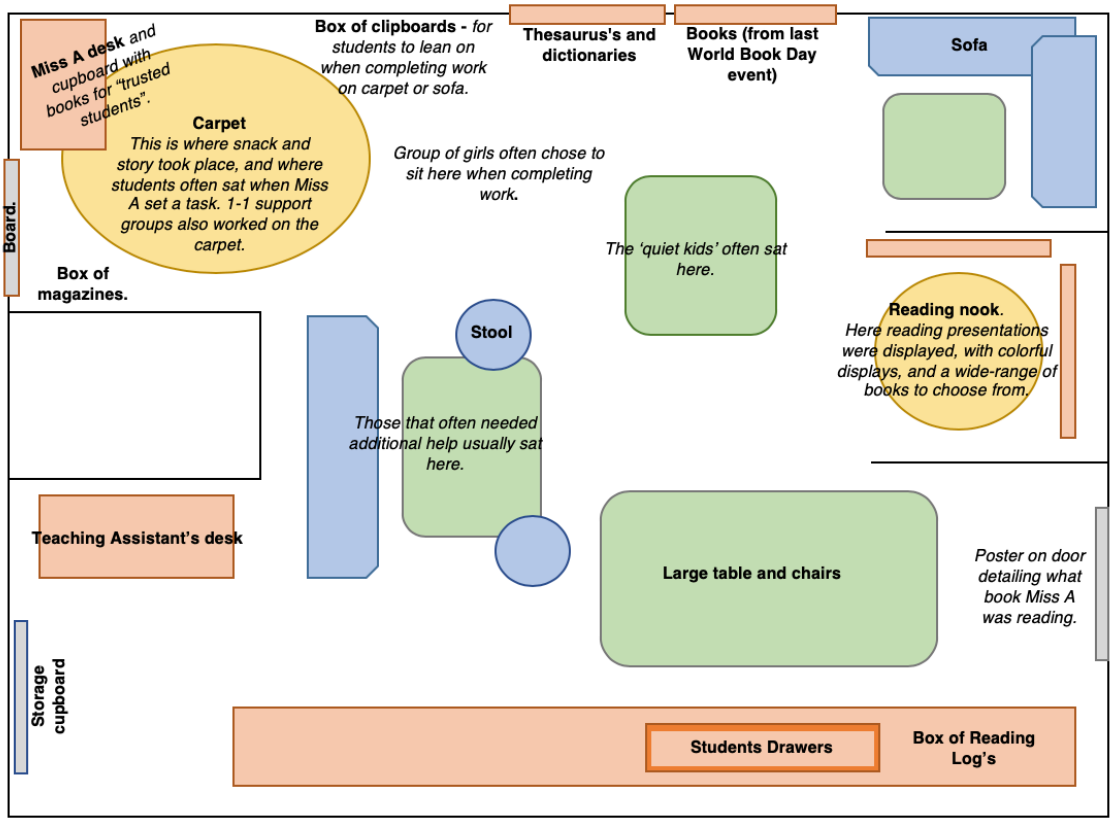
5.2.6 Immersive Teaching and Learning in the School

Immersive schools are schools that employ strategies designed to engage and excite children authentically. Usually relating to the school's 'topic' or 'theme', the school's corridors are elaborately decorated, with areas dedicated to particular subjects or school activities. Classrooms are also laid out differently to 'traditional' classrooms with displays, and themes continued throughout. Within the school I 'worked' at teachers were given a budget each term to decorate their class according to the 'big question'. The layout of the classroom I worked in is shown in Figure 1.

At the school I collaborated with, immersive teaching first began in the EYS (Early Years) and KS1 (Key Stage 1) where student responsibility was already far more prominent than in the later years. For example, students were responsible for: their own school pencil case, keeping their drawers and subject books tidy, caring for their reading book, choosing their own reading book, and choosing where to sit. Here student responsibility was high and allowing them to be in control of their learning and classroom maintenance was something that school leadership felt was a clear positive. This is often the case in 'traditional' UK primary schools, whereby EYS are given the freedom to play with toys of their choosing, often moving freely around the classroom. This style of environment was therefore

trialled in Year 2 and Year 5, with student responsibility increasing. For example, in later years when 'morning work' (short activities given to ease students into their up-coming lesson) was completed, students were given the responsibility to amend marked work or complete un-finished activities from the previous day. As student and teacher feedback was positive this style of immersive teaching continued throughout all years. In particular student responsibility and freedom is something that visitors to the school have commented on as being especially instrumental to the school's immersive success.

Figure 1. Classroom Layout (adapted from field notes)



The Year 5 class I collaborated with was reading *The Diamond Brothers In… The Falcon's Malteser* by Anthony Horowitz (2012) in which Nick, and his brother Hebert (also known as Tim Diamond) are entrusted with a package by a strange dwarf called Johnny Naples. Johnny Naples does not reveal the contents of the parcels but warns them to keep it safe in exchange for £200. Yet, Naples does not return for the parcel and is mysteriously killed. After a terrifying threat from a man named "The Fat Man" (who also wants the package) Nick and Herbert open it to reveal a box of Maltesers. They then continue with their 'detective case', including searching for clues as to how and why Johnny Naples was killed. Wrongly blamed as the killer (by private detectives Snape and Boyle) Herbert gets the blame, and Nick is left alone with the package (which is heavily desired). After a series of events which slowly see's Nick realising the meaning behind the Maltesers, and the introduction of characters such as Lauren Bacardi (a lounge singer), The Falcon (dead, but had the secrets to the whereabouts of a stash of diamonds), Gott and Himmel (the Falcons two lieutenants), Beatrice von Falkenberg (Falcon's wife), and The Professor (the Falcons technological whiz), Nick unearths the true meaning of the Maltesers and a plan forms. Though he

finds the safe with the diamonds supposed contents as well as the key (the Maltesers) the diamonds have gone. Shortly, after we learn that Lauren Bacardi worked out how to open the safe, stole the diamonds and escape. Though sent Nick one (concealed in a Malteser) as a thank you.

5.3 Key Concepts for Promoting Reading

I now discuss the key approaches to reading that led to an authentic reading of the novel for the students. These concepts are discussed through a cognitive poetic lens and are placed alongside pre-existing work in the field. Where applicable I will also offer an insight into my field notes, students work and the class layout. The 'key concepts' I will focus on are:

- Reciprocal Reading - 5.3.1
- Reader Mentality - 5.3.2
    - *Efferent vs Aesthetic reading*
- Reading Spaces - 5.3.3.
- Choosing the Text - 5.3.4
- How Students Read - 5.3.5
    - *Reading Aloud*
    - *Independently*
    - *Individually*
    - *Reading to Others*
- Reading Relationships - 5.3.6
    - *Reader Motivation*
    - *Knowledge of Children's Literature*

I will discuss what the approach entails and how (within the school) it helped promote authentic reading, personal response and reading for pleasure. Reading relationships are discussed last, as they are applicable to all the preceding five key concepts.

5.3.1 Reciprocal Reading

As I was interested in students reading experiences, providing an in-depth insight into the school's programme of reading is crucial in creating context for my subsequent data analysis. Reciprocal reading is what the school used to improve reading comprehension. It is a structured method of reading that focuses on the transaction between teachers and students. The teacher often models methods of learning, so that students can reciprocate this to help construct meaning. The more grammatical, linguistic features (required by the NC) were often more predominately taught in 'English' lessons, where a different 'set text' was studied. Whilst reciprocal reading was dedicated to reading comprehension and experience. Though the more technical aspects were not explicitly taught during reciprocal reading lessons, they featured where applicable or appropriate within the context of the task.

Reciprocal reading begins once students have finished the Read Write Inc. programme. Although it is re-named in KS1 as "Language and Literacy" and modified according to level, it is similar to the foundations of reciprocal reading. These foundations are what reciprocal reading uses to structure approaches to teaching. Teachers are provided with a 'reciprocal reading' handbook which

outlines four key areas of study. These are as follows (though taken from the handbook, the explanations below are adapted from my field notes).

1. Predict: Students are encouraged to use "key sentence starters" (i.e. I predict that…, Because…) to predict what they think might happen in the upcoming chapter or section. Whilst individual interpretations are encouraged, the handbook emphasises that predictions must remain "reasonable". This a concept explored by Rosenblatt (Section 2.3.2). Although individual interpretations are important, they must also be relevant to the text. Meaning, students must be able to facilitate appropriate discussion about their answer. They cannot form interpretations that they are un-able to verify or explain. This latter scenario is what Rosenblatt (1978: 144) argues is a "faulty reading" and should be avoided.
2. Clarify: Clarify is used for specific words and phrases (not to aid understanding of whole sentences or paragraphs). Teachers are encouraged to select words that they think students might struggle with **before** reading the upcoming section. This enables students to gain an understanding of words before they encounter them within the context of the text. Students are also invited to select words they need clarification on, **after** they have read the text. The teacher within my study, explained that this was a guideline, and so often amended aspects of the handbook slightly.

> Date - Thursday 13th June - Morning Session
>
> Throughout her reading of Chapter 17 of The Falcon's Malteser (Horowitz 2012), Miss A stopped multiple times to check understanding (using prompts were needed).
>
> - When asking the students what Nick meant when he said, "one-way ticket", Miss A used prompts about what the Fat Man would be feeling, to ensure the students understood his anger, and desire to kill Nick. Hence the mention of "one-way ticket" (Nick thought he might die).
> - During this same reading, Miss A also asked the students what the author meant when describing the wind as feeling like "skeletal fingers". Once they had understood this feature, she then asked them what linguistic feature this was.
>
> (*Devoy 2019 Field Notes*)

3. Question: This is a 'task-based' activity, with a prominent focus on reading and writing comprehension. Three different question styles are provided as a guideline, each of which are colour-coded and labelled accordingly (i.e. green= "find it and write it", blue = "look for clues", pink = "why that way"). This was a section I did not explore much within data collection, as there was nothing of immediate interest nor was this something I saw used often in class. I have, however, provided a specific example to show how this works in practice.

> Date - Thursday 27th June - Afternoon Session
>
> For around 15 minutes, during a particularly sunny day, the teacher took all the class outside to work on their reciprocal reading task. They were first instructed to read up-to the next chapter and were tasked with creating questions about what they had just read. They used the colour coded guidelines laid out by the reciprocal reading handbook as prompts (which was particularly useful for SEN students). After they had all completed two each, they returned to class (as it was home-time). The questions they had all created were then placed in a box and selected during an activity the following day.
>
> (*Devoy 2019 Field Notes*)

4. Summarise: This is an opportunity to check student understanding, by allowing them to summarise what has happened in the current section. This also allows students to place their understanding of the section just read, in relation to the previous sections. Similarly, to "Clarify", sentence starters are given as prompts (i.e. "In this section we found out…").

Summarise and Predict are two elements that proved especially useful in fostering authentic reading and are therefore the two elements I focus on in my data analysis (see section 5.10). As well as providing students with the opportunity to accrete knowledge of the entire novel themselves (using prediction-based tasks to check their understanding of what they had read so far). Summarise and Predict were tasks that worked around the issue of 'time restraints'. Time restraints are an issue that teachers have continuously highlighted (Cushing 2018b; Cremin et al. 2014; Cliff-Hodges 2009; Dean 2006). By allowing students to read, summarise and predict possible up-coming events tasks were focus on the reading experience as a whole, as opposed to de-contextualised extracts and grammatical or linguistic features.

Throughout these exercises, written and spoken tasks were often partnered with drawing. This was something my class teacher utilised frequently. Allowing the children the opportunity to visualise and draw their working schematic knowledge of the novel, meant that they were each able to bring their own individual interpretations to specific aspects. This is a method commonly used in TWT approaches to secondary education. For example, Cushing (2018a) used TWT to inform lesson design and classroom talk. Working with a teacher who felt that TWT was a way to challenge 'stock responses' from students, Cushing (2018a) applied the theory to evidence how valuable individual student interpretation was to their reading experience. Using visual exercises within class also helped teachers (at the school I collaborated with) to identity and review student understanding (i.e. character drawings, in relation to given character descriptions). However, it is important to note that the reciprocal reading tasks and lessons detailed below were taken from one class. The handbook did reiterate that the four steps (predict, clarify, question, summarise) were given as guidelines and different teachers would therefore adapt and suit these

accordingly. Therefore, how reciprocal reading was taught within Miss A's class, would likely be different to others.

5.3.2 Reader Mentality

As well as opportunities for reading within 'subject lessons' (for example, during reciprocal reading and literacy lessons), the school is clear in their aim of authenticity. Whilst it is clear that efferent reading (defined below) is adopted for the more technical aspects of English lessons (where students were given structured activities and taught grammatical terms as laid out by the NC), allowing students to explore reading regardless of the goal was something the school promoted. Promoting aesthetic reading often helps to create a positive reader mentality, thus fostering reading for pleasure and an understanding of personal preference. This is reiterated in Giovanelli and Mason's (2015: 42) study whereby "the space to interpret the text, to experience it themselves" is described as being instrumental for authentic reading.

Rosenblatt (1978: 22-47) offered a simple solution to this problem. She began by differentiating between aesthetic and efferent reading. Aesthetic reading focuses on the 'active' process of reading, which includes the lived through experience of reading and the emotions carried alongside this. Efferent reading focuses on what is retained after reading, so the information acquired and the process to reach this. To keep in-line with NC requirements whilst combining more authentic aspects, teachers therefore need to maintain a balance of the two. It is important that a student is able to recognise this difference. For example, if a student is given the opportunity to develop two schemas for reading (one for 'reading for pleasure' and one 'reading for analysis and comprehension') they are able to differentiate and apply the appropriate 'reading schema'. By simply placing this alongside Rosenblatt's (1978) solution of efferent vs aesthetic reading, we are able to imagine a student with an efferent narrative schema and an aesthetic narrative schema. Applying this knowledge to my understanding of reader mentality within the school, helped me to focus on the different notions of reading that students encountered.

5.3.3 Reading Spaces

By drawing on Massey's (2005) concept of space and time, I began to explore spaces within the school that used the environment to create subliminal messages about reading. Massey (2005) – a cultural geographer who argues that space is intrinsically tied up with time – invites teachers to explore their classroom space. For example, how is the furniture positioned? (is it clustered for group work or in rows for teacher led tasks?), what messages are given on displays? (is students' work evidenced? is this gender bias?), what texts are available or students to read and what information does the school offer on reading? (what are the school rules? is learning de-contextualised? how does the school navigate assessment and scores?). By exploring these elements within my study, I was able to gain a much better understanding of the message's students were being given about reading.

Reading spaces are spaces that promoted a positive culture of reading for students. For example, corridors and classrooms often had book displays, with teachers offering students the chance to see what book they were reading (a poster on their door). Cremin et al. (2014) suggests that when teachers model this engagement with reading, students are likely to reciprocate. The school also held 'reading events' such as World Book Day where students were invited to dress up as their favourite character. However, the space I felt was of immediate interest was the classroom. Although a dedicated space (labelled in Figure 1 above) was made for reading, the entire classroom helped to promote a positive reader mentality: texts were varied (magazines, fiction, non-fiction), spaces were inviting and Miss A also offered "trusted students" the chance to select books from her "personal library of books".

The elements of the classroom, such as: the bean-bags, dedicated reading spaces, and immersive displays, were elements of the class that worked well in ensuring students felt more at ease reading than in 'traditional' UK schools. Mallet (2017: 390) argued that "where we read is as important as having the reading materials we want". In 'traditional' UK schools (even where independent reading is encouraged), children often sit at their desks, reading amongst their peers. Yet this is a very unnatural way of reading (Mason 2016*)* and not how individuals would usually choose to read (for example, if at home). Cremin (2015: 6) argues that by modelling reading in more natural environments, students are more likely to identify the 'real-world relevance' of reading. In my study, because students had the space for authentic, undisturbed reading, their 'passion' for what they had read appeared to emerge with students eager to discuss their book with their teacher, peers and me (see Section 5.3.6 for specific examples).

Reading spaces can impact the activation of students' 'aesthetic' reading schemas. By drawing on contextual information about the spaces they were familiar with, students further tune their schematic knowledge of what it is to read authentically. For example, when reading for pleasure students often sat on the more comfortable seats (sofas, bean-bags).

> Date - Wednesday 5th June - Morning Session
>
> Though I had only been observing for several weeks, I had begun to notice that students often gravitated towards the same spaces when reading. For example, several children continued to select the sofas to read, with a large group of girls choosing to sit together on the carpet. It seemed like they had all found a space that they preferred to sit and read, suggesting their 'reading' schemas had been tuned according to their selected 'spot'.
>
> (*Devoy 2019 Field Notes*)

Being able to recognise the importance of reading spaces was also crucial in foregrounding how instrumental they were in creating positive reading identities and relationships (which I outline in depth at Section 5.3.6).

5.3.4 Choosing Their Own Text

During crossovers between lessons, after 'morning tasks', or once they had completed activities, students were able to read independently. During these readings, students selected their own text, a responsibility the Arts Council (2003: 62) felt was especially important to help promote a culture of reading, beyond mere exposure to literature. Allowing the students to select from a plethora of books and take them home was important in laying the foundations for motivation to read. Mason (2019) has highlighted the implications of students not being able to take their books outside of the classroom - especially in circumstances where parents are unable to afford resources such as additional books for their children. Even where schools provided books to take home students are often required to select 'age appropriate' or 'level appropriate' texts (usually colour coded or labelled accordingly). Yet choosing their own text (regardless of academic outcome) is what Cremin et al. (2014: 16) argues "enhances their motivation and self-determination as readers". Therefore, paving the way for developing independence in reading (Cremin 2015: 63).

The majority of the students in the class seemed to have a clear understanding of their preference and usually reached for texts similar in style or genre. Whilst the majority of students reached for fiction, there were several students who opted for more varied texts (e.g. Joke Books, Comics). Mallet (2016: 73) felt that around this age (9-10) "children's sense of humour becomes more sophisticated and they enjoy the possibilities of logic and common sense being turned on their heads". Allowing them to explore this is crucial then for developing an understanding of preference regardless of 'level' or 'reading score'. It means that their schematic understanding of reading is not exclusive to one genre. For example, within secondary education 'classic, canonical' texts (such as Shakespeare) are taught, with students given less time within class to read other genres. Focusing predominately on these texts is what Dean (2006) feels distorts students' views on reading. This being said, reading for pleasure is more likely to occur when students are introduced to a wide range of texts (not just novels).

> Date - Thursday 18th June - Morning Session
>
> James (to note this name and all names throughout this thesis have been changed to ensure anonymity) seems to favour more comedic books, often choosing to read Michael Rosen poetry or joke-books. During the lesson he was chosen to showcase his reading presentation, which he did on Michael Rosen's *The Laugh out Loud Joke Book* (2016). Though he was told-off for reading without stamping his 'reading log' (students read at home, and their parents sign to confirm), it is clear that James was a motivated, avid reader, with a clear understanding of what genre he preferred to read.
>
> (*Devoy 2019 Field Notes*)

Allowing students to select their own texts not only enabled them to gage their reading preferences and therefore give them the required motivation to read but helped give them additional responsibility often absent in current NC frameworks.

By removing restrictions on what students could read (age and level related), students were being given the responsibility to select and look after their own text. Dean (2006: 30) argued that this responsibility was crucial moving forward in education. He felt that "a significant change likely to become much more mainstream in the near future in all schools will be the greater attention to the notion of personalisation in learning. The consequence of this shift will mean students being required to take far more responsibility than is currently expected for the direction, content and manner and outcomes of their learning…such a trend will not grow easily from a tradition where little responsibility is given to the student" (Dean 2006: 30).

5.3.5 How Students Read

How students should read is widely contested in the field, and arguments on the value of individual reading, reading aloud and reading to others are often at the centre of these debates (see: Cremin et al. 2014). Block and Mangieri (2002) explain that research has shown that just 15 minutes a day of independent reading significantly improves children's reading abilities. Cremin et al. (2014: 96) also suggest that reading aloud "gives children access to sophisticated themes and literary language which are beyond their independent reading capacities: it can be cognitively challenging without place literary demands on children". Yet teachers often feel that these are luxuries that cannot be afforded, as time-restraints continually restrict more opportunities for authentic reading (see: Cushing 2018b; Cremin et al. 2014; Cliff-Hodges 2009; Dean 2006).

Whilst research has frequently highlighted the potential of elements such as reading aloud (Read Naturally 2019) time-restraints are often to blame for lessons dominated by structured, teacher-led, mechanical reading tasks. However, within the class I worked with individual reading, reading aloud and reading to one another were all incorporated during the day. Time-restraints were not an issue here, instead these elements were introduced within the lesson and had become ingrained within day-to-day activities. For example, when reading the reciprocal reading text, the teacher would shift between reading aloud, and reading in pairs - with students often given the choice on how they would like the up-coming section to be read. As well as giving them additional responsibility and input into their learning, this allowed students to explore how they preferred to read or be read to.

5.3.6 Reading Relationships

It is clear that ensuring students have a positive attitude towards reading is intrinsically tied with their motivation to read. Research suggests that reading "develops the imagination and supports personal, emotional and cultural development" (Cliff-Hodges 2010), "has a positive impact across wider curriculum attainment" (OECD 2002) and "can strengthen, challenge or alter the way in which we see the world" (Landay & Wootton 2012). Yet more is often required for students to continue to pursue reading. Here is where 'reading relationships' are especially important. Research (Mallet 2017; Rosenblatt 1978) suggests that students are usually unsatisfied with merely reading a text, instead they want to share, discuss, and take this excitement beyond the pages. For example,

Rosenblatt (1978: 70) explains that whilst "it is possible that a reader may be satisfied simply with the evocation and response dimensions of the reading process, turning his attention completely away at the end of these dynamic activities without further reflection, there are usually instances where there is reflection on the experience and an effort at interpretation". What this means is that often individuals, whether that be alone or with another, think about the text after they have read it. This could be thoughts on their understanding, experiences they related to, characters they empathised with, or queries about continuing story-lines and plot development. Establishing a culture of reading within the classroom can help students feel like their teachers and peers want to hear about what they have read. Reading therefore becomes as much a social activity as an individual one. Peplow et al. (2016) adopt a socio-cognitive perspective, where they refer to the reading experience as firmly social. What they meant by this was that readers often construct their own interpretations based on social factors such as their life experiences. Schema theory and TWT (utilised in Peplow et al (2016)) are especially useful in tracking these factors, including how and where they informed textual interpretation.

Date (Throughout my time at the school)

Hannah came over to me almost every session to update me on the book she was reading - *Mr Stink*, by David Walliams. The book, though comedic, has mature topics (i.e. homelessness, friendship, loneliness) and focuses on the relationship between Chloe and Mr Stink (see: Appendix 5 for novel's blurb). Hannah's updates were mostly about the two main characters (Mr Stink and Chloe), who she appeared to be emotionally attached to, often empathising with their 'situation'. Gibbons and Whiteley (2018: 268) use TWT to explain that by projecting into other viewpoints, we reflect on our own sense of self. This immersion means that we able to easily build an imagined text-world and relate it to our own (real-world). A lot of the conversations I had with Hannah were about the emotions she felt during reading, and what she might feel or do if in the same situation. Encouraging these responses meant that Hannah was able to reinforce the emotions she felt, with concrete examples (from the text).

(*Devoy 2019 Field Notes*)

Within the class, students seemed aware that I was interested in their reading. It is therefore likely that when they discussed their reading with me, it was because they knew I was interested and shared a love of reading. This was something I also saw with Miss A: she had a love of reading that she shared with the class. They were therefore eager to discuss their reciprocal reading and individual books with her (outside of the lesson).

5.3.7 Key Concepts Summary

It is clear that the school I partnered with worked hard to achieve a positive reading mentality for their students and discussions with leadership helped me to understand the conscious decisions that helped them to develop and instil this.

Despite instances of manufactured reading (Section 5.8.1), the school made sure that students were able to utilise their 'aesthetic schemas' alongside this. Using the six key concepts, outlined above, I was able to identify where opportunities for aesthetic reading were more apparent. For example, during 'snack and story' (where students are read to, whilst eating a snack), a book was selected (by the students or teacher) that had no academic relevance or follow-up task. As snack and story was done every-day, the students were consistently being exposed to authentic reading. The students were also given the opportunity to freely select the text in a reading space where the teacher was able to model engagement (intonation, excitement). Whilst this seemingly mundane task was just one example of how the school promoted authentic reading, the six concepts I have discussed above are a good indication of how well the school promoted authentic reading regardless of a goal or outcome.

5.4 Knowledge of Children's Literature

The positive reading relationships that were established in class (and throughout the school) are the result of reciprocal reading, reader mentality, reading spaces, choosing the text, and how students read. Yet, Cremin et al. (2014) argue that the potential for establishing reader relationships is made greater when the teacher has knowledge of children's literature. This is widely contested in the field (Mallet 2017; Cremin 2014; Kwek et al. 2007; UKLA 2007).

During Phase 2 of the UKLA (United Kingdom Literary Association) (2007) study (which applied four methods of teaching to help improve teacher and student attitudes to reading) teachers noticed a clear change in students' attitude to reading, and therefore improvement in their reading scores (Cremin et al. 2015: 105). Whilst 'book talk and recommendation' methods did help to aid this success; it is clear knowledge of student's literature did not. The methods involved within that 'book talk and recommendation' (hosting reading events, involving themselves with local libraries and networking with other teachers) were not indicative of 'knowledge of students literature'. It is possible that the phrase has become mis-used to suggest that teachers must read, enjoy, and have a rich understanding of children's literature. The methods outlined to help improve 'book-talk and recommendations' were net-working tasks that required teachers to expand themselves as readers - not their knowledge of children's literature.

In this thesis, I suggest that 'knowledge of children's literature' should not be a requirement for primary teachers. Instead reading relationships should be prioritised by focusing on elements of authentic reading. Though it was clear that whilst Miss A had substantial knowledge of children's literature, she did not rely on this to establish authentic reading within the classroom. During her discussions surrounding teacher input, and her responsibility within lesson content and planning, Miss A explained that she had selected the reciprocal reading book herself. This was approved by the assistant-head, with the school ordering the appropriate number of books for the class. Miss A's reason for choosing *The Maltsters Falcon* by Anthony Horowitz (summary given in section 5.2.6 above) was to help improve boys engagement. This gender-gap with reading is evident on a wider scale (Pinkett & Roberts 2019). When I asked how she had selected the book, though brief, Miss A explained that she had

researched age-appropriate books, humorous in nature so that it would cater to both female and male students.

Whilst Cremin et al. (2014) and the OECD (2007) believe having expansive knowledge of children's literature is instrumental to a best practice, so is having confident, happy, passionate teachers. Cushing (2018b) and Giovanelli (2015) have exampled how damaging suggestions that require teachers to gain additional knowledge is to their professional and personal identity. How then can 'knowledge of children's literature' and confident, happy, passionate teachers co-exist? By forcing teachers to re-assess what knowledge they require to help children acquire 'aesthetic' reading schemas, their own reading schemas are at risk. Teachers are ultimately being forced to re-conceptualise what reading is to them (for example, 'reading is knowledge') or, in other words, tune their own schematic knowledge of 'teaching'. Interestingly, they are being asked to tune information according to what they have been told (gain knowledge of student's literature). This transmission of knowledge is an element of manufactured reading I argue is detrimental to students' experiences. Arguments surrounding 'knowledge of children's literature' and their aim of establishing positive reading relationships are therefore heavily contradictory.

5.5 Teacher Identity

In this section, I draw on the notion of teacher identity to frame Miss A's personal beliefs and philosophies on teaching and reading, and how this translates into pedagogical practice. Miss A, from the start of my ethnographic study, came across as a very passionate, engaged, enthusiastic individual and teacher. She expressed her understanding of 'new' and 'up-coming' immersive schools and compared this to her partner's experience of working in a more 'traditional' school: "he gets much less freedom and input". Discussions with other teachers also reiterated this, with Miss B (a Year 2 teacher) explaining that their input extends to choosing the class set text, selecting certain topics, and focusing on children's more immediate interests. As seen within the discussion of 'reader relationships', Miss A continually discussed reading with her students and identified as an avid reader herself. In practice, her 'language' was very open: she often favoured open-ended questions, or prompts designed to help the students reach an understanding on their own.

In general, in the school, both teacher and student input seemed to be valued within the curriculum (see Gunckel & Moore 2005; Ramparsad 2001). Throughout data collection it was clear that Miss A's personal beliefs and ideas of a 'best practice' aligned with those of the school and leadership. Although I did not attend every day, and only saw a small portion of Miss A's teaching, it was clear that she was content with her job. The students within Miss A's class were generally engaged with their learning and appeared at ease in the classroom environment. In Varghese et al.'s (2005) study, Morgan (an author in Varghese et al) through self-reflection and participant observation notes gained an insight into student perceptions of him as a teacher at university. He found that these perceptions "underpinned both the relaxed and mostly positive atmosphere of the classroom and the types of language learning that took place within" (Varghese et al 2005: 31). Removing restraints, and minimising pressures (through innovative, creative,

student and teacher led learning) allowed teachers to retain their professional identity. Giovanelli (2015) suggests that the opposite is evident when teachers are placed within a setting in which they feel insecure.

The school worked with a teacher training programme, to allow trainees to train and take placement at the school. All of the TT/NQT's received appropriate books surrounding 'immersive teaching' and were invited to explore these. Studies (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009; Flores & Day 2006) have shown how "a myriad of factors related to school environments, school culture and leadership, and relationships with students and colleagues affect or shape a sense of self-conception both in the course of initial teacher education generally, and more specifically among trainee teachers" (Giovanelli 2015: 147). Interestingly (during chats with the class TT), it was clear how the school, Miss A and the school's aims and philosophies were reflected within the teachers. Although the TT wasn't 'forced' to read the appropriate books, she wanted to. However, it is clear based on the discussions made throughout this thesis, that most schools align with 'mechanical' 'routine-driven' 'standardised' methods. It is therefore more likely to imagine teachers who traditionally favour 'personal growth methods' (see Section 1.5) in schools that have little choice in attaining to manufactured methods and accountability cultures. As this is likely to be the most common occurrence, it is easy to image how teacher identity could be threatened on a wider scale.

5.6 School Philosophies, Aims and Beliefs

In relation to the three 'main' figures – Hirsch, Rosenblatt, and Cremin – I used to define the key areas of a 'best practice (see Chapter 2), the school I worked with most closely aligned with the pedagogical features Rosenblatt (1978; 1995) felt were most crucial (i.e. authenticity, personal response, utilising context, student-led). There were also some elements of Cremin's (2015) philosophy when looking at the more creative projects. Cremin (2015) encouraged contextualised teaching, taking 'risks', collaborating on tasks (i.e. class work, pair work, partnerships with parents, authors, dancers), evaluating reflective feedback (developing project work accordingly) and student-led projects. The school often adopted these features during 'project lessons' where students' spent the term producing, developing, and directing their own work (often relating to the termly 'big question').

In order to make clear how these aims, beliefs, and philosophies bled into practice I will also be more broadly discussing what the school does to promote authentic reading (Section 5.7), using one particular student as a case study (Section 5.8). This will allow me to highlight the features of the school aligning with Rosenblatt (and my idea of a best practice) and reflect on these using cognitive poetic frameworks, as well as pre-existing research in the field.

5.7 The Creep of Manufactured Reading

Evidencing what the school does to promote authentic reading, and how their aims and beliefs reflect in practice is best explained using the concept of 'imparting knowledge'. Imparting knowledge is a concept similar to the arguments surrounding a 'teacher-led approach' - discussed in Section 2.2.2 as one of the

main areas contested in a 'best practice'. Mason and Giovanelli (2017: 321) explain how in the classroom there is usually "an imbalance of knowledge and experience: generally, teachers are re-readers guiding students who are first-time readers". In their (2015) study Giovanelli and Mason described this in terms of schemas. In circumstances where the teacher has read, re-read, analysed, and thoroughly planned out lessons surrounding the class set text, they have a "rich narrative schema". This contrasts with a students' "skeletal schema" - having not read nor seen the book. Teachers with a rich narrative schema are therefore more likely to opt for methods of teaching that align with a manufactured reading approach. For example, Xerri (2013) evidences the damage of teachers (unknowingly) in-putting their knowledge into their students, by spoon-feeding them the answers. Xerri (2013) found that this scenario was something that teachers and students identified, though exam pressures were often to blame, they felt they had little opportunity to adapt their methods.

Adopting features to promote "authentic reading" meant the school often avoided elements of pre-figuring and imparting knowledge. Instead the 'power imbalance' was not apparent in class. For example, the 'predict' reciprocal reading step which required students to formulate **educated** guesses on potential events or character developments, reflected the schools 'aims' on reading particularly well. Prior to the reading of Chapter 18 *"In the Bath",* the teacher prompted the class to re-cap what had happened in the previous section to help guide their 'predictions' on what could potentially happen next. During the re-cap, no attention was paid to particular events or characters. Ensuring no aspect was pre-figured is essential in allowing students to reach an understanding individually (Mason & Giovanelli 2017; Cushing 2018a).

For the 'prediction' task students were invited to sit on the carpet, working in pairs to discuss their ideas. Miss A then asked them to share their idea with their peers. Although none of their predictions were correct, they were all plausible in relation to previous events (i.e. "The Fat Man gets caught right before he realises how to open the safe" "Nick is taken to the police station, and questioned, and he tells Snape and Boyle everything about the Maltesers, the Fat Man, and the safe). During this activity, Miss A did not correct or amend any of the student's ideas, however she did make it clear that their predictions should be applicable in relation to previous events and the story's plot. This was something advocated within the reciprocal reading book - "make sure children are giving reasonable predictions for what they think may actually happen". Ensuring students are not encouraged to accept an 'anything goes' mindset, is crucial in adding viability to individual responses and interpretations (as explored in depth at Section 2.3.2). That does not mean certain responses are 'disregarded' or personal responses should be eliminated, rather Rosenblatt (1978: 144) argues that it is equally important to identify where emotions or feelings evoked by the text have been completely misunderstood. Developing ideas, whilst avoiding a seemingly 'faulty reading' is therefore crucial in teaching students how to harness the power of personal response in an educated, viable way. Allowing students to predict upcoming events, not only allows them to creatively formulate their own individual responses but requires them to have a clear understanding of the entire novel's tone, genre, and ideas. Something the NC requires at KS3 (ages 11 to 14) (DfE 2014a).

5.8 Case Study

Explaining how the school's beliefs, aims and philosophies reflect within classroom practice, demonstrates the centrality of authentic reading in the school. In this section, I offer a case study of one student. This student was chosen as academically his reading-age was not where it needed to be (according to NC requirements). However, his passion, engagement and love of reading was prevalent throughout my time at the school. This was especially interesting given his status as an EAL student.

Oliver was a student who embodied all that I have argued for throughout this thesis: he had established strong reader relationships, had a positive reader mentality, had the motivation and desire to read and had a clear understanding of his reading preference (i.e. genre, tone). After one particular session, where I had worked with Oliver and another student on their reading assessment, it was clear that Oliver had established that I was a person he wanted to discuss his reading with. Several times throughout my time at the school, Oliver came over to chat to me about the books he had been reading and/or the reciprocal reading book. As our reading relationship strengthened, talk turned to more 'opinion' based questions. For example, one session Oliver asked me about what books I liked to read and what I was currently reading. I told him I enjoyed fantasy, mystery, and books with a clear moral, and that I was currently reading *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (2007). Oliver asked me what the book was about, and I explained the themes (i.e. war, Jews, the power of reading, discrimination). Interestingly, Oliver (almost immediately after) made a connection to another book he had read or encountered that was similar in theme (i.e. race discrimination). Cliff-Hodges (2010a: 67) commented on book topics that require you to "think completely differently about something" (i.e. real-world events), explaining how they often stay with students long after the duration of reading. Although Oliver could not remember the novel's title, he was able to recall key scenes and themes. Whilst it is likely that his schema required refreshing to recall the novel's title, his understanding of the plot and themes shows that Oliver had accreted and been able to recall the novel overall. This is something not seen where manufactured reading is prevalent in class. Mason and Giovanelli (2017: 25) found that when responding to texts was in tension with learning content: students were less likely to re-call and authentically experience the novel as a whole. This was because elements had been pre-figured, and their schema's damaged (they had not accreted textual knowledge themselves). Being able to make intertextual links between different texts is a skill required at upper KS2, and more immediately in KS3 and KS4 of the NC (DfE 2014a). Reading numerous books is what Dean felt (2006: 30) was crucial in encouraging students to make intertextual links between their class 'set text' and others they had encountered, thus, making the 'set text' relevant on a wider scale.

In terms of reading level, Oliver often opted for books that were below the NC 'expected' level for his age. Yet, it was obvious that Oliver had a clear passion for reading. By allowing him to select and read what he wanted regardless of 'age' or 'level', Oliver had become a motivated reader. Oliver's reader mentality and his motivation for reading was especially important as both the reciprocal reading

and the 'English' text were classed as high level. Although being offered the chance to hear the texts through activities such as reading aloud and reading in pairs had given Oliver the chance to experience topics, words and texts that he would otherwise not be able to access (Cremin et al. 2014: 96). Cremin et al. (2014: 13) suggest that providing the opportunity for reading regardless of outcome is pivotal for students acquiring 'intrinsic motivation'. Cremin et al. (2014: 13) defines this as "having the desire to read regardless of the outcome or reward". This is therefore similar to Rosenblatt's (1978) differentiation between efferent and aesthetic reading (see section 5.4). When I asked Oliver if he was enjoying *The Maltesers Falcon* he said that although it was "hard" he had enjoyed reading it and it had "helped him with words in his other books". He was also particularly fond of the 'prediction' based tasks, as he felt this was where he could "be most creative". By ensuring 'goal-driven' reading tasks (Cremin et al. 2014: 18) were partnered with reading that did not figure particular linguistic, analytical or grammatical elements, there was the chance for students to gain 'rich' narrative schemas of their own and therefore also the power and potential to develop as readers.

5.9 Manufactured Reading and Assessment Pressures

The damage of manufactured reading has been discussed throughout this thesis (see Chapter 2), with Mason and Giovanelli (2017: 327) arguing that "such pedagogies may encourage homogenous and less creative responses from students". In order to explore the implications of this, I consider two unrelated tasks: the 'drama task' and 'the reciprocal reading assessment'. These offer evidence of how NC requirements and SATs pressures produce manufactured reading experiences. Even in a school wholeheartedly advocating for personal response, authenticity, and reading for pleasure, the results of NC frameworks and SATS pressures (e.g. manufactured reading) are still evident.

5.9.1 Drama Task:

For their reciprocal reading lesson, students had just read a section of the novel (where Nick had been captured by the thugs, and The Fat Man). Once they had read and discussed this section, they were set a drama task. The students were asked to act out a scene (including speech) from the section they had just read. After the students had chosen and practiced their scene in small groups, Miss A asked several groups to act theirs out for the class.

Utilising drama is widely advocated in arguments surrounding a 'best practice' (Cremin & Macdonald 2013) yet the task was structured and rigid in nature. When setting up the task Miss A had made it very clear that the students follow the scene closely, further suggesting they take the book with them to practice the speech correctly. As Maybin (2013: 60) argues "the SATs focus strongly on information, retrieval, inference and interpretation" and it is these skills that are being practiced in the class drama task. The students seemed to enjoy the task and they were all eager to 'bring the story to life'. Cliff-Hodges (2010a: 65) discusses such activities in terms of immersion: "literature is a bridge into other worlds". However, it did highlight the implications of two contradicting schemas being activated. During the drama task students were being asked to build and

perform a text-world using the world-building elements evident in the text. For example, “the bathtub” and “cement” (objects), “the thugs” (characters), “each carrying a large bucket of wet cement” and “the stuff poured out sluggishly” (function advancing propositions). Students were being asked to model the character, yet their own individual schemas were side-lined. Instead students were experiencing elements of a manufactured reading, and the task had therefore become a ‘taught’ one.

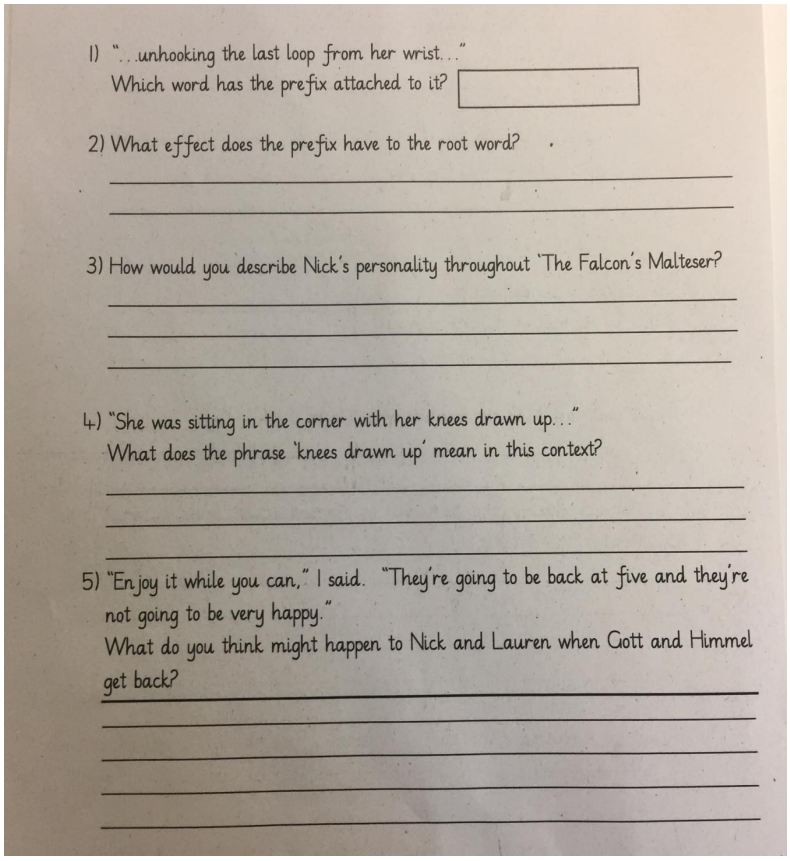
Interestingly, during one of the groups performances, one of the students, Luke (who was often quite mischievous), went off script (not in-line with Miss A’s instructions). To give context, the group were acting out a section whereby Nick had his feet in a bathtub and “the thugs” were pouring cement into it. As Luke was playing Nick, he jokingly quipped “do you need any help with that?” to the three students ‘pouring in the cement’. The class erupted into laughter, and Miss A immediately told him off. However, it wasn’t until after I had left the class, and analysed my data that I had noticed how well Luke had embodied the wit and humour of Nick, though this may not have been his intention (rather he wanted to get a few laughs). In the context of manufactured reading in which students needed to re-produce the text, Luke instead utilised some of his own schematic knowledge. This contradiction, and mixed-message, could be potentially damaging to a student’s reader mentality.

5.9.2 Reciprocal Reading Assessment:

Towards the end of term, students undertook a reciprocal reading test. This was described as a ‘trial’ form of assessment (requested by the assistant head), and so Miss A reiterated to the students that they did not need to worry immensely about this. The assessment task focussed on *The Maltesers Falcon*, and I worked with two students who needed additional support. I re-read the previous section of the book with them, and then the students continued to read the section appropriate to the assessment questions. The assessment questions are shown in Figure 2.

Both students seemed to prefer the more ‘creative’ questions (Q3, 9, 10 and 11) with one student particularly favouring the prediction question (Q10). In general, their understanding was good, though this was expressed better when they discussed it with me outside of the assessment than in their written answers. There were also attempts at ensuring context was utilised (i.e. Q4). Both students struggled with Question 1 which required students to label the word that had a prefix attached to it (a style of de-contextualised question, not favoured in the field - Myhill et al. 2011), with neither of them knowing the answer or even attempting to guess.

One student (Oliver) who was particularly passionate about reading expressed issues with Q5. He had identified that this question was like the ‘prediction’ tasks in their reciprocal reading lessons, though he felt that the question was pre-supposing that something bad was going to happen: “I’m guessing something bad happens then”. Later in the session, this was ‘revealed’ with Nick and Lauren Bacardi’s escape aligning to what the student suggested might happen (“They might escape using the rope they were tied up with”).



1) "...unhooking the last loop from her wrist..."
Which word has the prefix attached to it?

2) What effect does the prefix have to the root word?

3) How would you describe Nick's personality throughout 'The Falcon's Malteser?

4) "She was sitting in the corner with her knees drawn up..."
What does the phrase 'knees drawn up' mean in this context?

5) "Enjoy it while you can," I said. "They're going to be back at five and they're not going to be very happy."
What do you think might happen to Nick and Lauren when Gott and Himmel get back?

6) Can you summarise what has happened on these pages?

7) "...now the ropes were falling away from her like over-cooked spaghetti"
What does the author mean by this?

8) "She looked better without it."
Is this an example of fact or opinion?

9) If you could ask Nick one question what would it be?

10) Predict what is going to happen in the next section, based on what you have read in this chapter.

11) Would you recommend this book to anyone? If so, who would you recommend it to and what would your reasons be? Give justified reasons for your answer.

Figure 2. Assessment Questions.

I went over to remind him that he had correctly predicted this, but he shrugged and said: “Oh I knew it would be something like that, that’s why we got asked it”. This is an example of a more immediate issue with pre-figuring. Despite every other predictive task that the students had (which were vague, open-ended, and never focused on a specific event such as the one in Q5), the one attaining to a ‘manufactured’ reading experience had had an effect. Oliver had become less interested and motivated by the novel’s event (Nick and Lauren escaping).

5.9.4 Summary of Authentic vs. Manufactured Reading in the School

Even in a school that aligned with Rosenblatt, and conscious about encouraging positive reader mentality, NC requirements and assessment pressures were still evident. Although the examples I found within the school were ‘minor’ in comparison to studies that evidence manufactured reading on a wider scale (Giovanelli & Mason 2015; 2017), my study reiterates the damaging effects of NC requirements and assessment pressures.

5.10 My Interventions

In order to apply the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 3, I created two activities in partnership with Miss A. I wanted the activities to be aligned with the school’s ethos, whilst remaining ‘true’ to the factors and elements of a ‘best practice’ that Rosenblatt (1978; 1995) and Cremin (2015) favoured. I did not want to introduce activities that I knew would fit with the framework nor were the activities created in-line with cognitive poetic models. Rather the activities were created to allow me to more broadly gain a further understanding of their reading comprehension, to explore authenticity (and its value) and to identify if students were able to identify the significant scenes.

I created two activities in line with the schools ‘reciprocal reading’ steps. Cognitive poetics was used in pedagogy to highlight the potential of the frameworks, to show a teacher how valuable it was as a ‘tool’ to think with.

The two activities I created were:

1. (5.9.1) – Draw a ‘Significant’ Part of the Text Task.
2. (5.9.2) – Hot Seat Task (*a ‘character’ is chosen and the remainder of the group question them accordingly).*

When discussing these activities, I will begin by outlining why I chose the task. I will then outline the lesson plan applicable to this (placed in a box) with snippets of data provided to reinforce my findings.

5.10.1 Draw a ‘Significant’ Part of the Novel Task (Task 1)

As the ‘reciprocal reading’ activities promoted a culture of authentic learning, I wanted to identify the impact this had on the students understanding of the entire novel. As the task required students to identify the ‘significant aspect’ of what they had just read, they were being asked to identify aspects of the section that were important but in relation to the entire novel. Understanding the novel’s plot allowed them to identify which aspect of the section had more of an impact for plot development. I therefore asked the teacher to stop at the moment right before

we learn that Nick has figured out where the diamonds are, how to get them and therefore the introduction of his 'plan'. I wanted to avoid reading this section as it was clear that this would be the most significant aspect.

The Task - Draw a 'Significant' Part of the Text:

Lesson Plan: As with the traditional reading lessons, the students were instructed to sit on the carpet. Here the students continued to read from Chapter 17 through to Chapter 18. The teacher stopped several times to check their understanding, prompting where needed (i.e. Miss A asked the children if they knew what time of the year the scene was set in, as this highlighted Nick having no heating in the flat as an issue). Once they had finished reading the teacher stopped, just before we learn of Nick's 'plan'. She then explained the task, ensuring no information that would pre-empt their answer was given.

During the section, several important narrative details are revealed. These are what I identified as the 'significant aspects' of the novel:

a) Snape and Boyle have been watching Nick and had therefore seen all the 'mischief' he had been getting up to,
b) Herbert has been released from prison, which Nick just learns and proclaims that he has not yet seen Herbert,
c) The Fat Man cannot be arrested as there is not enough evidence and so was therefore still around.

The teacher asked them to draw what they each thought was the significant aspect.

5.10.1.1 The Activity:

Once the instructions had been set, and the students had decided what aspect of the chapter they wanted to draw as the 'significant aspect', several began to question how they would be able to draw the section they had decided. As most of the students chose (a) and (b) – *often togeth*er – they had immediately recognised that although they could visualise this world-switch mentally, it would not align with the task. The task required students to "draw a significant part of **the text just read**" (not a significant part taken from previous chapters). Within the scene just read, Nick is sat in the car with Snape and Boyle [world one]. During their conversation whereby Snape and Boyle are informing Nick about previous events (those occurring within the novel, and those not yet known to the reader), the students were able to articulate a dietic world shift (back to a world where these events were occurring). By identifying the world-switches that were occurring, several students questioned how they could complete the task: "I can't draw Nick being released from jail because I never saw that happen", "I can't draw what's already happened, that's not what we have to do". The teacher proceeded to prompt them by suggesting they include 'text' with most students recognising that they could use speech bubbles (a visual representation understood to indicate speech or thoughts from a particular character).

5.10.1.2 Data Analysis:

Once the children had drawn their pictures, it was clear to see how their schematic knowledge of the novel had aided their understanding of the visual aspects of the scene. All of the students drew very similar versions of Nick, Boyle and Snape. Sam, for example, had perfectly encapsulated all of the details of the scene (see Figure 3 below). He had both depicted the coffee cups ("while the kettle was boiling") and all aspects of the scene in relations to the novel's descriptions ("Snape and Boyle had made themselves comfortable in the office"). The students had clearly accreted knowledge about character descriptions using the information they had been provided with throughout the scene and entire novel.

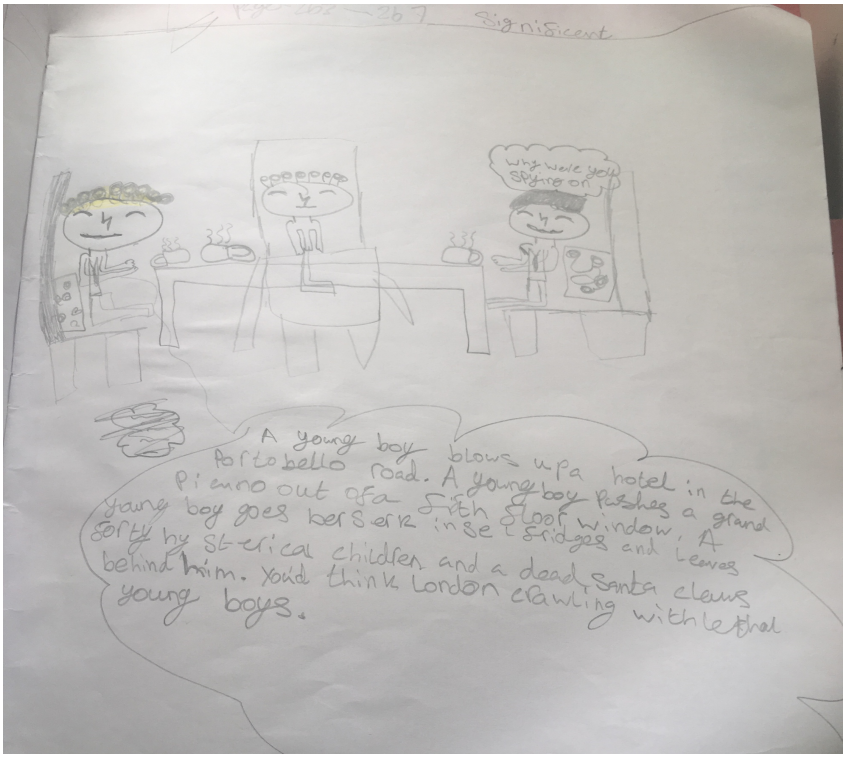


Figure 3. Drawing from Sam (of Snape, Boyle and Nick).

Tuning this schematic knowledge was also evidenced by Lucy. When I asked Lucy about her drawing, commenting on Boyle and Snape's (the private detectives) "excellent facial expressions", Lucy provided me with an insight into the tuning of her schematic knowledge of 'police officers':

> Lucy: "they're good aren't they. I had to make them wear normal clothes, like normal people because they are aren't, they? and then I made Boyle look really grumpy because he's always angry when he talks to Nick, because he always wants to hurt him…"
>
> Me: "normal people? what do you mean by that?"
>
> Lucy: "well they aren't like normal police officers because they wear uniforms, with a badge and stuff…oh and they have to follow rules, but Snape and Boyle don't do that. Boyle always wants to hit Nick, he said that

earlier didn't he that he wanted to hurt Nick, but Snape stopped him…and that's not what police officers do. well not the police officers I know".

Lucy had cleverly identified two characters in a job role she was familiar with. However as 'private detectives' in a humorous, fictional novel, they were not traditional in her schematic sense of what police officers look and act like (i.e. uniformed, careful, following the rules). As more information was provided, Lucy had altered her understanding of 'police officers' to create a text-world that included two characters that were accurate according to their descriptions.

Allowing students to develop this information themselves and continue with character building as this happens within the novel, gives them the opportunity to authentically experience the text as readers would in a 'normal setting' (for example, if reading this on their own, outside of the classroom environment). Experiencing the novel in this way had ensured no aspects of the text were pre-figured. Instead students were invited to "generate individual responses" crucial for authentic reading (Giovanelli & Mason 2015: 53).

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As mentioned, throughout the reading of the novel, Miss A often asked about the text, characters and plot development. This meant that students' narrative schemas were not pre-figured. When I first began to observe the class, I had not read *The Maltesers Falcon* and so often relied on the students to explain certain aspects, thus reversing the schematic roles (rich vs skeletal schemas) usually associated with teacher and student respectively (Mason & Giovanelli 2017). This seemed to be something the students particularly 'liked': they were far more eager to discuss the novel with me. By remaining in power (in relation to knowledge input, as discussed at section 2.2.2.1) the students were excited to share what they knew with me. This was something also evident within their individual reading presentations (an optional opportunity for students to present a text they had been reading to the class - in any format) (see Appendix 6).

5.10.1.3 Task 1 Conclusion

Asking students to draw the scene enabled teacher insight into their understanding including identifying the world building elements students saw as crucial to the text-world in question. For example, in figure 3, Sam had gone into particular detail in setting the scene, using the objects and characters to help inform his text-world. He had also modelled the characters, inferring information based on the scene. For example, Snape (labelled on Figure 3) has been drawn with a smile on his face and Boyle looking rather disinterested. Based on the characters throughout the novel, and information we receive throughout the scene (i.e. "Snape let out a sniff of laughter" and "That made Boyle scowl again"),

the facial expressions are appropriate. It was also particularly useful to identify where their individual schemas were being utilised. Unlike in the drama task, the students were able to use their individual experiences and knowledge to help aid their understanding of the scene (as seen with Lucy). As, they had been given free rein to draw what they felt was most significant, without instructions on what aspects to focus on, or what to text to include, they were able to completely model the characters without outside input (teacher).

5.10.2 Hot Seat Task (Task 2)

The hot seat task was designed to fill a full lesson. The use of hot seats is something that Cremin (2015: 58) suggests allows students to "empathise, understand and emotionally connect with a character". As my previous activity focused more specifically on one scene, I wanted to plan a lesson that could potentially evidence multiple avenues of learning (entire novel and character understanding). This would enable me to evidence how cognitive poetic frameworks can be applied together and inform more complex lessons. As a framework in which to help plan the lesson, mind-modelling and schema theory were used to help guide what I wanted to do. Mind-modelling accounts for the fact that all individuals begin their mental representations by assuming their own experiential qualities are the same as others (Stockwell & Mahlberg 2015). Mind-modelling was therefore used to focus on students' attention to characters and how they embody these characters in relation to previous learning. Schema theory was used to discover what schematic and background knowledge students were utilising to help model their chosen character.

In this lesson, students continued reading from Chapter 18 into Chapter 19. Chapter 19 is where Nick's plan unfolds, ending with the characters (Nick, Beatrice Boyle, Snape, and Herbert - also known as Tim Diamond) surrounding the safe. As it had ended with a pivotal scene, I wanted to ensure no aspects of the safe reveal were pre-figured. I therefore ensured the task was about characters, as opposed to a more 'prediction' based task as this would suggest something the students weren't expecting was due to happen (i.e. the author has cleverly kept the surprise reveal concealed and I wanted to reproduce how this would be read).

The Task - Hot-Seat:

Lesson Plan: The lesson plan was split into four sections, which are as follows:

1. Recap - Students were invited to re-cap the last thing they had read, to help prepare them for the reading of the next section. To do this all students sat on the carpet, with Miss A asking them to put up their hands and explain a summary of what had previously happened to the class.
2. Task Set-Up - Miss A then explained the task to the class, splitting students into groups, with one student from each group dedicated to being in the hot seat. The students were told they could choose any character that was waiting around the safe.

3. Task Set-Up - Miss A then explained the task to the class, splitting students into groups, with one student from each group dedicated to being in the hot seat. The students were told they could choose any character that was waiting around the safe.
4. Questions - Once the student in the hot seat had decided what character they were, the remaining students were given time to think about what questions they wanted to ask. Therefore, giving the student in the hot-seat the opportunity to reflect on their characters' traits, feelings and point of view.

4. Task - Once they had done this, each group was assigned an area of the classroom to continue with the task.

The teacher told the class that they 'might' be able to switch positions, as several students wanted the chance to go in the hot-seat. However, there was not time for this. As time restraints are something argued as being a massive issue in education (see: Cushing 2018b; Cremin et al. 2014; Cliff-Hodges 2009; Dean 2006), I had taken this into consideration. This was the reasoning for the 'question' section of the lesson plan. Allowing students to think of appropriate questions, whilst the other (in the hot-seat) answered these accordingly meant that all students were given the chance to mind-model the character.

5.10.2.1 The Activity:

The majority of the class chose to play Nick, with the exception of one student who chose Beatrice. Nick is the main character throughout, and it is likely that the students therefore felt more able to mind-model him. There is also research (Rodriguez 2018; A. Cain 2015) that suggests that readers are more likely to embody characters to whom they relate or share characteristics. Once we model a character, we are likely to be in a position where we can share the features of the character (personality traits, current situation, strengths, weaknesses) more easily. Being able to tune their schemas accordingly meant that the students had accreted knowledge of the character that they were able to utilise in the task. Using this contextual knowledge, is likely to help inform student understanding.

As most of the class chose to play Nick, most of the questions were similar in style, reiterating their knowledge of the scene, and character awareness as a cohort. The questions most frequently asked were: "why are you so brave?", "what would you do with all that money?", "where do you think Lauren Bacardi is?", "what would you buy first?", "would you share the money with Herbert?". On comprehension alone, it is clear to see how well the students have considered Nick's and Herbert's character development, as their financial situation is a theme throughout the novel. Students in the hot-seat reciprocated this with the majority of them using Nicks wit, nerves and excitement to discuss what they would buy.

5.10.2.2 Data Analysis:

To mind-model the characters the students had begun to partner their own schematic knowledge of the character and the plot so far, alongside their own understanding of Nick as a student, similar to their age. For example, when asked about 'money' and what they would do when they received the contents of the safe, each student drew on different strands of knowledge to answer accordingly.

Being able to filter their schematic knowledge, so that they embodied the character and referenced themselves only when applicable to the characters point of view, was particularly skilful. To show this I have picked out one specific example, where a student uses his knowledge of being a school student and applies it to Nick's current position:

When the student was asked about the money, he replied "I'd buy clothes". When asked what he would buy, he went on to explain further "maybe a Christmas jumper to stay warm, some uniform probably, oh and maybe some cool trainers if there was money left". "The Christmas jumper" was especially important in recognising that the student had an awareness of scene building elements (i.e. contextual knowledge crucial for world-building). Previously in the novel, we are given information to alert us that it is Christmas Eve (Chapter 18 - "I'd forgotten until then. It was Christmas Eve") and that Nick's flat has no heating (Chapter 1 - "the gas had been disconnected", Chapter 18 - "The heat had been off for two weeks"). Not only is a Christmas jumper appropriate to the time of year, but the student also recalls Nick's lack of heating and references it back to the current situation ("to stay warm"). "School uniform" was also another practical item to suggest, and similarly to the Christmas jumper, is likely to be in reference to the contextual knowledge we are given about the 'setting' (i.e. it's the school holidays). "Cool trainers" are however more in-line with Nick's age, and something the student probably felt he could relate to. Here the student was using his awareness of Nick's character and aligning this with what he knew children of this age (or possibly more specifically himself) would purchase.

5.10.2.3 Task 2 Conclusion:

It is possible that by allowing the students to authentically read the novel, without pre-figuring certain aspects, or focusing too explicitly on singular events, the students had been able to gain a more general idea about the novel as a whole. This is a concept that has particular implications in studies on secondary education (Mason & Giovanelli 2017). Dean (2006: 28) argued that during English Literature lessons at KS3 and KS4, students were given the mentality that "finishing the novel is portrayed as being a badge of honour". Dean (2006) felt that extracts, themes, and key areas of significance were focused on too explicitly, with 'less important' information being grounded. By avoiding this mentality, the hot-seat task, evidenced the potential of cognitive poetic frameworks within the planning stage of lessons. Not only did schema theory, help to acknowledge the extent of students' character and plot understanding, but was particularly helpful when placed alongside other frameworks in the field (mind-modelling).

5.11 Reading the Last Paragraph

Interestingly during the hot-seat task, and throughout 'prediction' tasks, none of the students had guessed or questioned the safe's contents. They had all assumed the diamonds would be in there. When the teacher continued to read from the point where the characters are crowded around the safe, all of the students were shocked to find it empty. Once the teacher had finished reading, the students were eager to discuss the ending and ask questions.

5.11.1 Discussions (Straight After Having Read the Novel)

Immediately after they had read the novel, students were invited to discuss what they had learnt and raise their hands to ask any questions. The majority of the questions began with logistical queries about the potential size of the diamond Nick was given (by Lauren Bacardi), what it would look like and how much it would be worth. Cliff-Hodges (2010a: 64) argues that being able to "recognise the distinctions and connections between real and imagined worlds" is a clear value of reading. The students were taking what they had learnt in the book and applying this to imagine what the diamond would look like in the 'real-world'. The remainder of the questions were catered towards comprehension (i.e. "So what happened to Beatrice?" "When did Lauren and Nick go to the office?"). Oliver also enquired about the other books in the series as he was interested in reading more.

Discussions then moved to more visual aspects of the novel (i.e. front cover, illustrations) as there were debates about who the two characters on the front cover represented (see Appendix 7). Miss A seemed to have a concrete understanding of which picture represented which character, however the modalised language she used ensured she did not enforce this understanding onto her students - "I think that…" "I thought that…". Although it is crucial that students are able to use what they have learnt in the novel (character descriptions) and apply this accordingly, Miss A had given them the opportunity to 'refresh' their schematic knowledge themselves. Here is where re-reading would be especially useful. Rosenblatt's (1978) reader response theory views reading as a two-stage interaction, a view author Stephen King (2012) endorses:

> any good book, you should be able to read it twice. The first time, what I want from you is your total attention, and I want you to be engaged. I don't want you to be analysing, thinking about the language, um, I don't want you to see me at all. I don't want to be part of that equation. But if you come back to it again, I would like to think that there would be something else, as well".

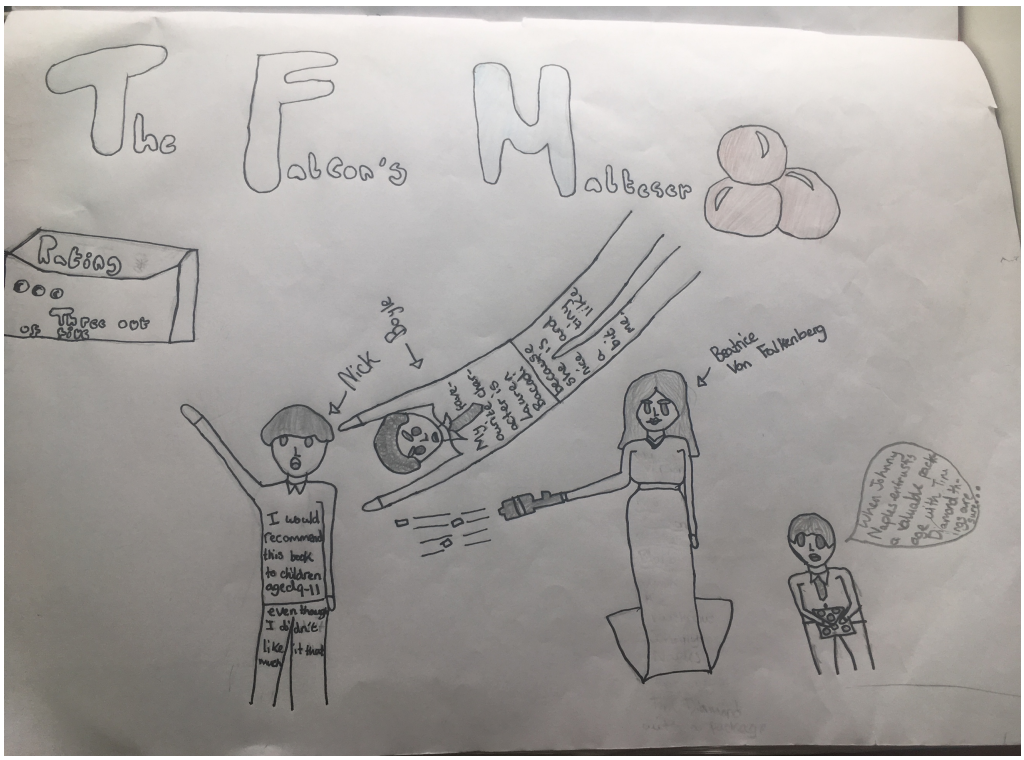
Time-restraints obviously restrict re-reading in schools. However, Miss A, did promise that she would re-read the first chapter in the next session. This would enable the students to further compare their understanding of the novel ending, alongside the whole plot.

5.11.2 Discussions (Several Days After Reading the Novel)

Returning to discuss the novel at a later date gave students the chance to reflect on what they had learnt. This allowed them to repair elements of their schematic knowledge that might have decayed or required refreshing. During this session,

students were tasked with drawing posters to recommend, summarise and talk about elements of the novel they liked or disliked. Allowing students to talk about the aspects they did not like is crucial in fostering a positive reader mentality: students do not need to enjoy everything they read, and it is crucial they are aware of this when gaining an understanding of their reader preferences. To evidence aspects of their understanding, awareness and likes/dislikes of the novel I have selected two posters: Leah's (Figure 4) and Daniel's (Figure 5). In relation to their previous comments on character confusion, it was clear that the students had repaired this knowledge accordingly.

5.14.2.1 Figure 4 (Leah's)

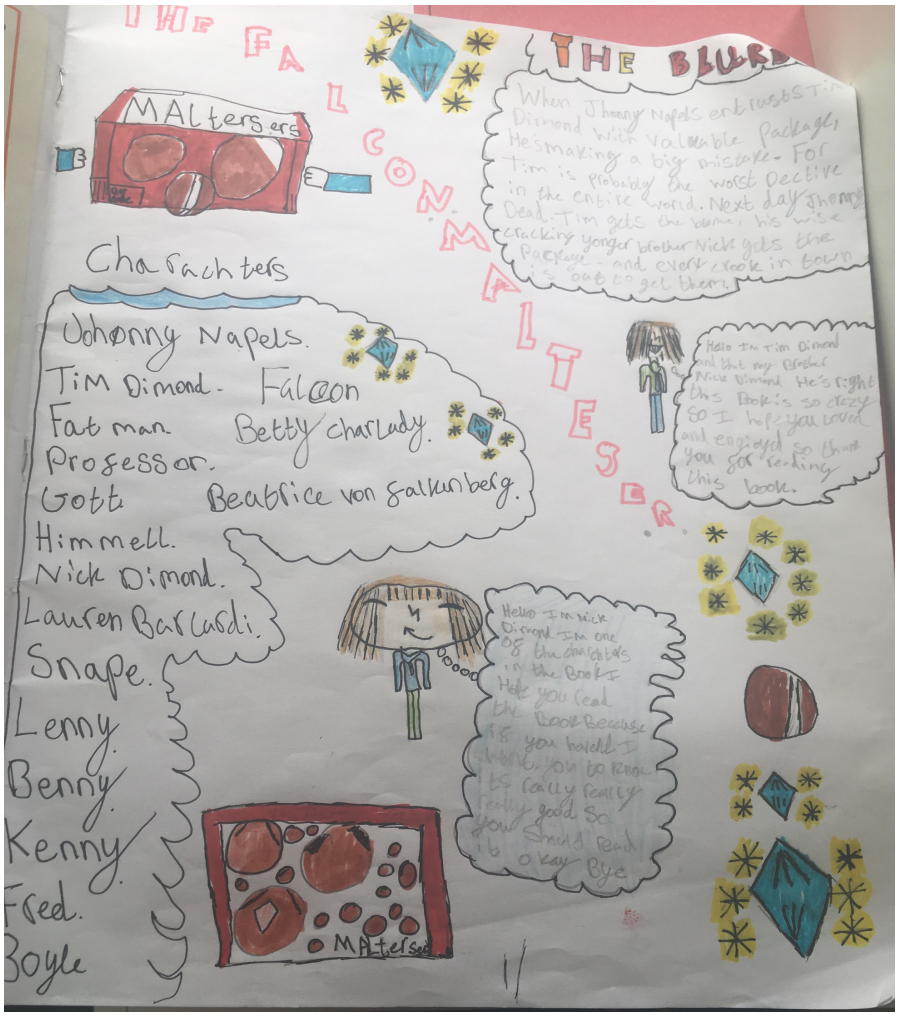


Leah rated the novel three out of five and explained that she "did not like it that much". In terms of NC requirements, this statement would need to be supported with concrete examples and reasons why. Leah was a student who was particularly low-level and was not an 'avid reader'. Acknowledging why she did not like the novel would be particularly useful then in helping her to navigate her reader preference. Although this is not something, we learn from her "did not like it that much" comment, her "favourite character" was a potential indicator of the elements she did like. Lauren Bacardi was chosen as Leah's favourite character, due to "being nice and a tiny bit like me (*Leah*)". I have already evidenced the importance of students being able to see themselves reflected in novels (see: Section 5.10.2.1; Rodriguez 2018; A. Cain 2015). Lauren Bacardi is a strong, independent, clever female character and so it would be interesting to see if Leah would favour novels depicting characters such as this. Identifying these aspects would be useful in encouraging reading.

Leah had also used the 'Maltesers' (of undeniable significance throughout the novel) as her book rating, drawing 3 Maltesers out of 5 to indicate her score. Using an element of the novel that was of clear significance and creatively using

it in her visual work is something the NC would not reward. Throughout the English section of NC (DfE 2014a), the words “creativity” or “creative” is not mentioned once , apart from to reassure teachers that “elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and language about language” are not “intended to constrain or restrict teachers’ creativity” (DfE 2014a: 16). Yet, the value of creativity is something Cremin (2015) argues is un-deniable. With regards to reading, Cremin explains that creativity “is highly motivating and seeks to positively shape children’s literature identities in the process” (Cremin 2015: 5).

5.11.2.2 Figure 5 (Daniel’s)



In his poster, Daniel creatively visualises the Maltesers, the diamonds and even the diamond within the Malteser (which is how Lauran Bacardi gave Nick his diamond). Though obvious, it clearly suggests he was aware of the novel’s plot purpose (i.e. figuring out the purpose of the Maltesers and then finding the diamonds).

His understanding of the novel was also reflected in the written pieces of his poster. Daniel had cleverly embodied the ‘narrator’ within the speech bubbles from his Nick and Tim drawings. Narration was something Taylor (2018) explored, evidencing its value and discrediting the NC’s lack of mention to “narration” or “narrator”. Before the very first chapter we are given a first-person insight into Nick who directly address the reader with “Dear Reader” (see Appendix 8). The

style of this section is very humours in tone, and even amusingly pre-warns the reader that the book isn't "good for you". Within his poster Daniel, perfectly encapsulates the tone of this section, reciprocating the humorous elements to remind readers "the book is crazy". Although the language used is not at the level NC frameworks propose, as evident in Maybin (2013: 63) adopting the tone of the text and narrating this, accordingly, is a far more creative, constructive way in which to respond to a text - "rather than regurgitating the text".

5.12 Chapter 5 Conclusion

Based on their individual responses it was clear that the students within my study had a good understanding of the novel. By ensuring no aspects of the novel were pre-figured, utilising context, and allowing them to bring in their own experiences and knowledge, the students were able to recall specific points, or particular scenes in relation to their understanding. Schema theory and elements of TWT were especially useful in evaluating this experience through a cognitive lens. The frameworks allowed me to add credibility to aspects of the school's pedagogical strategies that were introduced to promote authentic reading. In my study, I was able to account for: individual readers, the experiences they utilised, how interpretations progress, student understanding of particular scenes as well as the whole novel and character embodiment. I have also noted the potential damage a manufactured reading can cause to a student's positive reader mentality. For example, whilst Oliver (see 5.8) was an avid reader, his enthusiasm for reading did falter when he experienced pre-figuring (during his reading assessment).

Whilst there were features of a manufactured reading experience evident in class (see Section 5.7), the school counteracted this by allowing students to also cultivate a reading schema that encouraged personal response, free choice and authenticity. The students' reading experiences were therefore valued beyond 'scores' or 'test marks'. Our reading schemas are ever changing, and we accrete, tune, and modify them when we are greeted with new information. It is crucial therefore that students are able to practice a schema, that offers them the opportunity to develop as readers (for example, preference of genre, or author, or where and how they like to read).

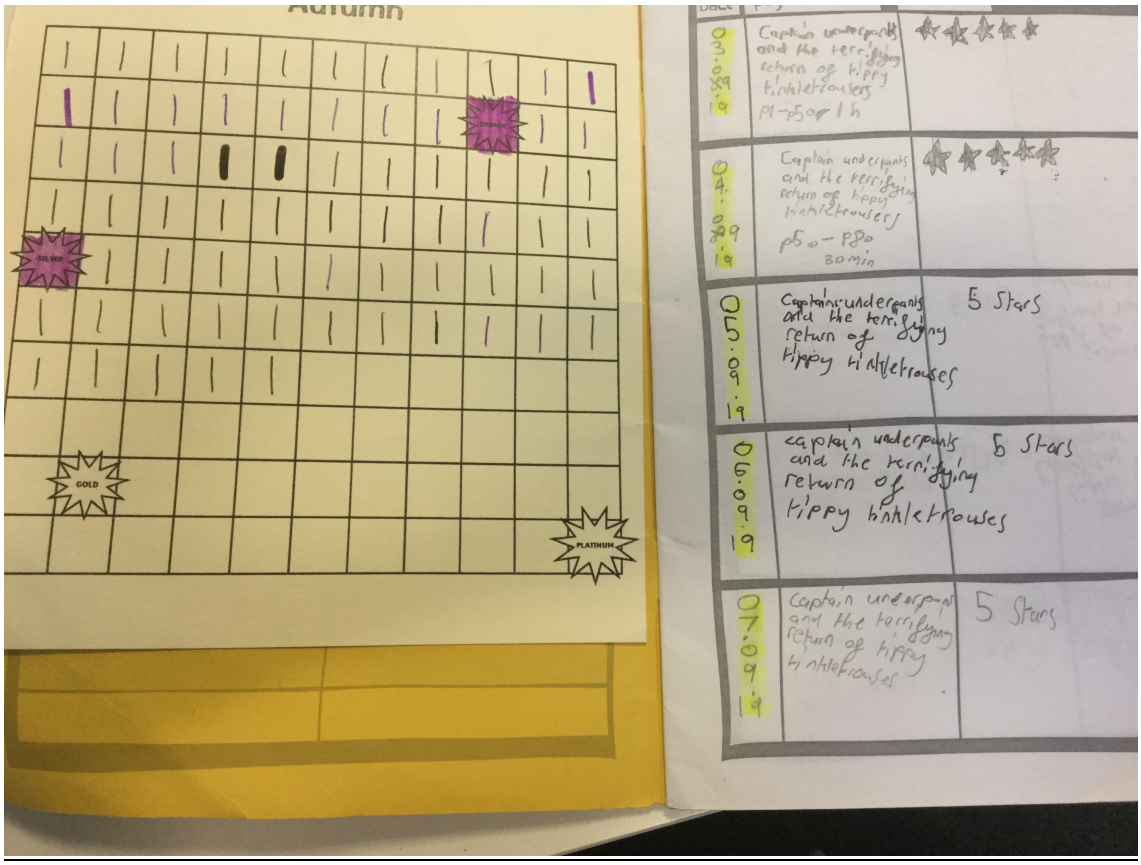
Chapter 6 - Conclusion

Assessment pressures in England mean that schools are often forced to adopt methods of teaching necessary for student 'academic success'. Such methods in relation to English teaching often produce manufactured reading experiences. The school and class in my study as well as my own classroom activities therefore did not focus on 'success' in relation to assessment marks or scores. Rather by aligning with ideas from Rosenblatt's (1978; 1995) and Cremin's (2015) best practice pedagogies, I wanted to foster a learning environment where reading was valued beyond assessments or SATS preparation. The immersive nature of the school in my study and its philosophies certainly help to create avid readers. Even where students dis-liked reading, their personal responses and individual interpretations were valued.

The aim of my thesis was not to implement or suggest changes that would 'better' reading within the school. Rather, I have explored and sought to theoretically account for the elements of a 'good' practice as evident in immersive reading classrooms. Accounting for these aspects using a theoretical framework is something that Gibbons (2013: 145) felt was especially valuable when applied to research that focused solely on practical knowledge. For example, when exploring the 'Aims of English Teaching Paper' (1956) Gibbons (2013: 145) felt that "it was waiting to be supported by a theoretical framework" in order to add credibility to its ideas. That entire paper focuses on personal choice, context, and experiences in learning, all fundamental principles of cognitive poetics. The 'Aims of English Teaching Paper' presented a vision of English that aligns with the concepts of a 'best' practice I have argued for within this thesis. The paper paid close attention to the student (something entirely absent in the current NC documents). Gibbons (2013: 146) argued that "sitting to plan a curriculum should mean we ask the big questions about English, what it is for, what its value is for children and how we induct them into the kinds of practices and knowledge that a rich study of the subject can offer". As I hope to have shown in this thesis, cognitive poetics has the potential to not only account for individual reading experiences but to add credibility to immersive pedagogical practices.

Appendix:

Appendix 1 - Reading Record Example (*photographed from the class involved in the study*)



Appendix 2 - SATS Paper - 'English grammar, punctuation and spelling' - Paper 1: Questions'.

5 Draw a line to match each **prefix** to the correct word to make a different word. Use each prefix only once.

Prefix	Word
inter	approval
dis	circle
semi	social
anti	action

1 mark

6 Which sentence must **not** end with an **exclamation mark**?

Tick **one**.

- You really must wear a coat ☐
- What a dreadful day I had ☐
- What is the temperature now ☐
- The wind is very strong today ☐

1 mark

Appendix 3 - SATS Paper - 'English grammar, punctuation and spelling' - Paper 2: Spelling'.

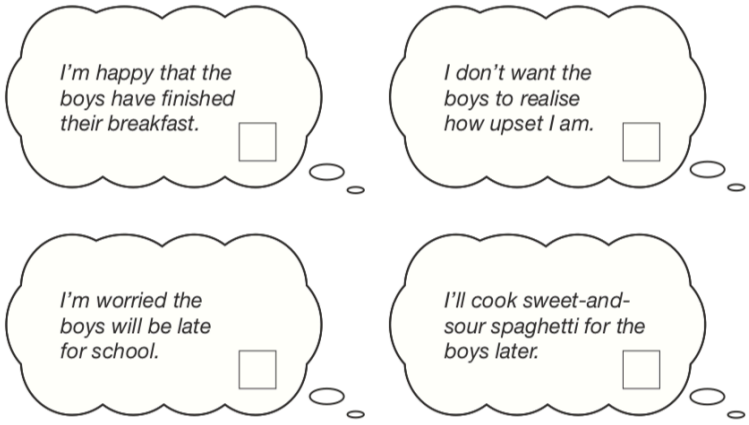
Spelling task

1. The dragon is an imaginary _____.
2. There was _____ food for everyone.
3. My little brother is in _____ class.
4. Playing in the snow made my fingers _____.
5. We learned how to do _____ in mathematics.
6. Charlie _____ with relief.
7. _____ is easier with a compass.
8. Khalid was a _____ boy.
9. Gran _____ us a snack when we arrived.
10. Do your stretches so you don't pull a _____.

Appendix 4 - SATS Paper - English reading

7 What is Joe's mother thinking after she reads the letter?

Tick **one** thought.



1 mark

8 *If she was trying to* ***reassure*** *Joe, it wasn't working.*

What does *reassure* mean in this sentence?

_____

1 mark

Appendix 5 - *Mr Stink* by David Walliams (2009) - Novel's Blurb

Mr Stink is a lonely man who always sits on a bench in town. Nobody ever comes and has a chat with him until one day a young girl called Chloe comes by.

Chloe is lonely too and they make friends, and Chloe desperately wants to keep him in her house, so he won't have to sleep outside any more. She sneaks him into the shed.

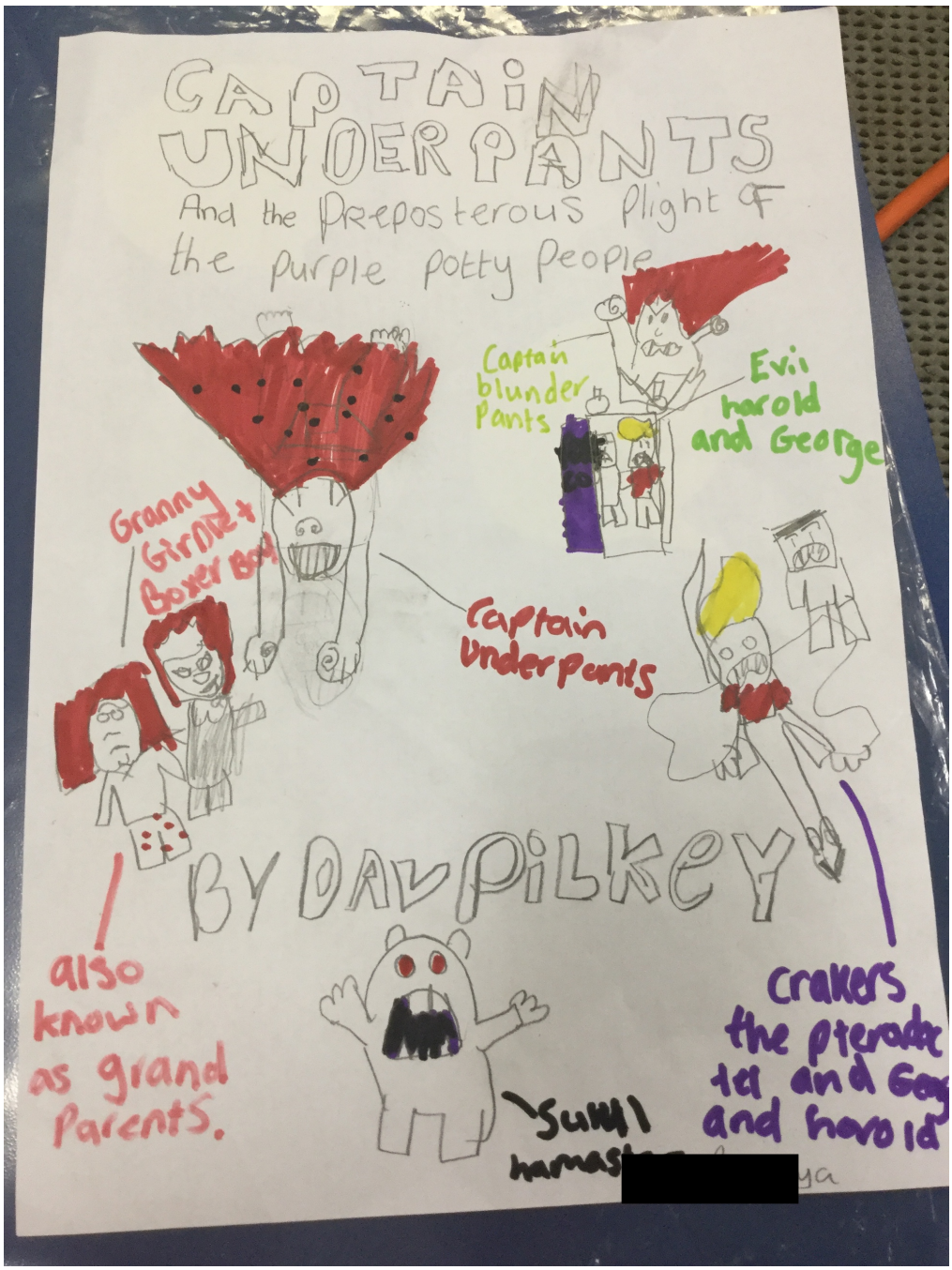
One day Chloe forgets his breakfast and Mr Stink comes knocking on the window when the Times journalist is there interviewing Chloe's mum because she wants to be prime minister.

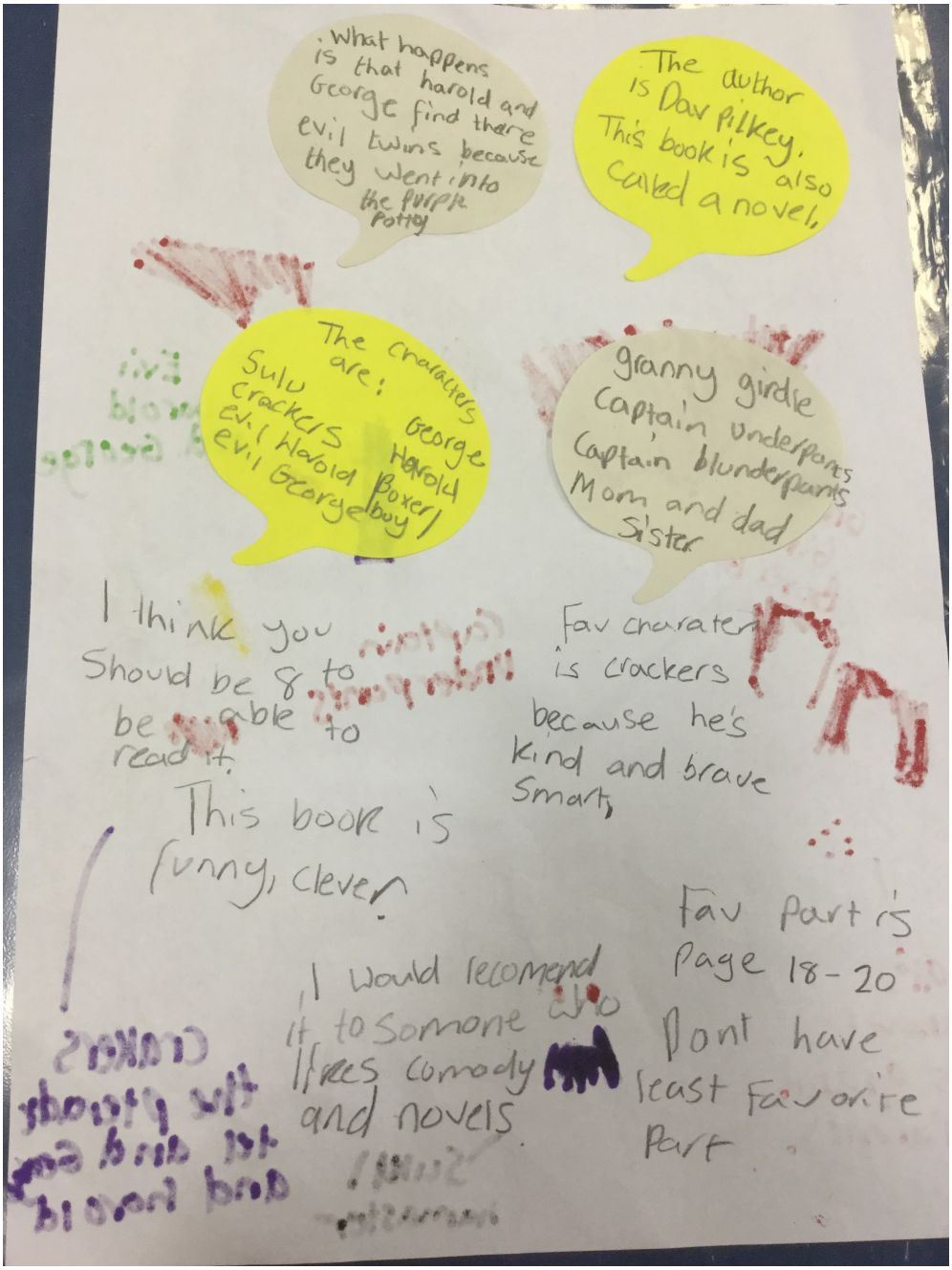
When Mum finds out she is horrified but when she goes on Question Time on TV with Mr Stink she pretends to like him and even lies, saying it was her idea to give him a home.

In the end the story is a little bit sad but you'll have to read it for yourself to find out what happens.

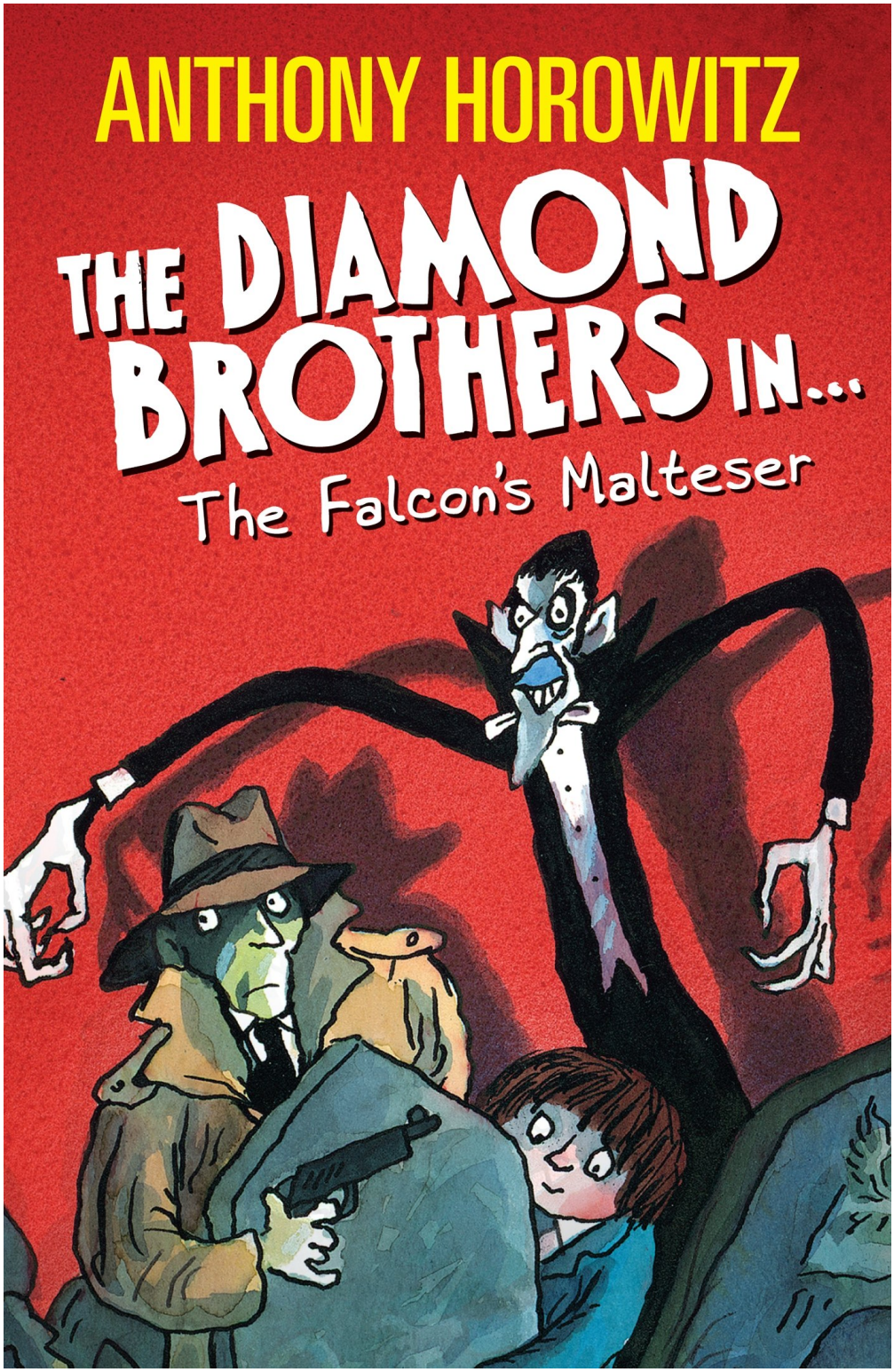
Despite the sad ending, this is a really, really hilarious book, probably one of the best I have read in my life.

Appendix 6 - Example Reading Presentation




What happens is that harold and George find there evil twins because they went into the purple potty
The author is Dav Pilkey. This book is also called a novel.
The characters are: George Harold Boxer/boy
Sulu crackers evil Harold evil Georgeboy
granny girdle
Captain Underpants
Captain Blunderpants
Mom and dad
Sister
I think you Should be 8 to be able to read it.
Fav charater is crackers because he's kind and brave Smart,
This boook is funny, clever
Fav part is Page 18-20
I would recomend it to somone who likes comedy and novels.
Dont have least Favorite Part

Appendix 7 - *The Diamond Brothers In…The Falcon's Malteser* by Anthony Harrowitz (2012) - Front Cover.



Appendix 8 - *The Diamond Brothers In…The Falcon's Malteser* by Anthony Harrowitz (2012) - an extract taken from the introduction (the first paragraph).

TIM DIAMOND INC.

23 THE CUTTING, CAMDEN TOWN, NW1

Dear Reader,

My name is Tim Diamond, but I don't know why I'm telling you that because the one thing I don't need right now is an introduction. The last time I introduced myself, I took two bullets in the chest. It's lucky I was hiding behind the chest at the time or I could have got hurt. Getting shot at is all in a day's work for me and I'm glad I don't do overtime. The streets where I live are pretty mean. And I mean mean. And not at all pretty. You'd be surprised how many people knock on my door, come into my office and try to kill me. Some of them don't even knock. But that's the sort of business I'm in. I'm a private eye and a lot of the people I meet like to keep their finger on the trigger – even the ones who can't afford the whole gun.

My guess is that you'll have heard of me. At the very least, you'll have seen my advertisement. TIM DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE: THE BEST IN THE. I'd have liked to say more but they were charging by the word. Anyway, this book will tell you just about everything you need to know about me except my shoe size – and in case you're wondering, it's ten and a half. Eleven in wet weather.

So why am I writing this?

Well, the publishers – Walker Books – are re-launching "The Falcon's Malteser" with a new cover and, of course, a new price-tag. You see that picture on the front? It took their team of designers sixteen weeks working night and day to come up with it. Maybe it would have been easier if they'd read the book first. But that's the thing about publishers. I've met livelier people in a cemetery. They're paid almost nothing and they're worth every penny of it.

In case you're wondering (and I can't imagine why you would be), Walker Books is based in south London, right next to the River Thames ... and if something goes splash in the night, it's probably the managing director. He never used to be suicidal – not until he looked at his sales figures.

They work in a building which is old and crumbling and desperately in need of a face-lift ... a bit like my editor. Actually, she's had so much plastic surgery they've run out of plastic, and the last time she sneezed she turned into someone else. It's scary what people will do to keep themselves looking good – and she wasn't great when she started. Anyway, Walker Books needs your pocket money. They're so desperate, they'll even take your pocket. Remember that book token you got for Christmas that's been in your bottom drawer ever since? They want it. To you it may be another crummy paperback but to them it's lunch.

And that's why they asked me to write this introduction. I got a call from my editor at the start of the month. Her name is Jane Winterton and on top of all the cosmetic surgery she has a voice that sounds like fingers being scratched down a blackboard, or maybe an animal in pain. Talk to her for too long and you want to throw yourself onto the nearest train. Or under it.

"Tim," she said. "We need your help."

"Who's been killed?" I asked. "And it had better not be the accountant."

"Oh, no," she simpered. "Mr Lloyd is fit and bouncing."

"Yeah. Like his cheques."

"What we need is one thousand, five hundred words for the new edition of "The Falcon's Malteser". We'll pay you fifty pounds."

"Fifty pounds?" I tried to work out the rate per word but I quickly gave up. I didn't have a pocket calculator small enough. "What's the idea?" I demanded.

"Well, obviously your brother Nick is the one who actually writes the books. But we thought it might be fun to hear something from you. Straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak."

She was the one calling me the horse. What a laugh! You should have seen her teeth.

"What if I'm busy?" I growled.

"Are you?"

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